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THE
LAYMAN'S
VINDICATION
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

IN TWO PARTS.

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|---|---|
| I. | II. |
| The Layman's general VINDICATION of Christianity. | The Layman's Plain ANSWER to a Late Book, intituled, <i>A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.</i> |

THE AUTHOR
JACOB ILIVE.

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THE
LONDON
GEORGE
H. B. B.



THE
LONDON
GEORGE
H. B. B.

TO HIS
MOST SACRED MAJESTY,
GEORGE II.
MONARCH
OF

Great Britain, France, and Ireland.



PERMIT me, Great
MONARCH, the mean-
est of Your MA-
JESTY's most Loyal
Subjects, to approach Your Sa-
cred Person, and to lay at Your
Royal Feet this Book, intituled,
*The Layman's Vindication of
the Christian Religion.*

A 2

WHEN

WHEN I consider the Peculiar Title Your MAJESTY enjoys, above all the Potentates of the Earth, *Defender of the Faith*; I flatter myself I shall have Your Royal Favour and Approbation.

MAY Your MAJESTY long live a glorious Ornament of Christianity, a Blessing to the Nations You govern, and when Your Dissolution cometh, be translated to the Mansions of Eternity, already prepared for those who sincerely imbibe the Principles of Truth.

THIS is the hearty Prayer of,

Your MAJESTY'S

Most Loyal and

Most Dutiful Lay-Subject,

JACOB ILIVE.

PREFACE.



WHEN our most holy religion is attacked, and its foundations sapped, by the open, avowed enemies of truth; when christianity, (the truths of the gospel dispensation,) is ridiculed and bantered by the sceptics of the age; when atheism and libertinism insult and domineer, it becomes the duty of all to stand up and contend for the truths once delivered to us, and openly to declare for and to vindicate the principles of our most holy vocation.

ENGAGED in this noble design, I behold two glorious STARS* shining in our horizon, by whose radical influence and paternal example, several lesser lights have arisen, as defenders and vindicators of the christian cause.

IN pursuance of the same glorious design, *The Defence of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION*, I offer to the world the following performance.

THE reader will not expect a learned and elaborate piece, a work stuffed with the sayings of other men, and crammed with quotations from them, tho' this might easily have been done, had I thought it necessary: But it is my design to prove and vindicate christianity

* *The BISHOP of Coventry and Lichfield against Grounds and Reasons, &c. in defence of CHRISTIANITY.*

The BISHOP of St. David's in defence of our SAVIOUR'S MIRACLES.

christianity in such a method as the most illiterate may thereby become proper judges of it, and receive it upon its own bottom, convinced by the internal and external marks of evidence itself affords.

FOR this reason, here is very little cited, besides what frequently occurs in the scriptures. These are appealed to as the standing rule of our faith. The facts there related are evidenced by their narration. And I have endeavoured to demonstrate that the principles of CHRIST are such, as do in their very nature lead us to happiness, and at the same time to conclude, as in justice they ought, that he wrought the miracles recorded to have been performed by him, and that he is very GOD of very GOD, HE whose days are from of old, from everlasting, the ALPHA and OMEGA, the beginning and the end: the very BEING whom the prophets expected, and the very

A M BEING

BEING in whom their expectations were accomplished.

If the reader is benefitted hereby, if he is confirmed in his faith, if he receives any additional light from the perusal of the following pages, if he is induced to receive the truths of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION more firmly than heretofore; and, if he be excited to pursue those virtues which lead to happiness, I have my end: it is the good of the community, of which I am a member, I have principally in view.

THE scepticism and infidelity of the age calls upon every man to try and examine the evidences of our most holy profession. And if hereby the reader is enabled to give a reason of the hope that is in him, in opposition to the cavils and arguments of bold and daring disputants, who falsely accuse our faith, his time in reading this volume will not be lost.

AND

P R E F A C E.

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AND it will also appear, that if there were no such writings as those we call the *Old Testament*; yet christianity is established upon a sure and firm foundation: a foundation against which the gates of hell, [*i. e.* the malice and inveteracy of its most implacable enemies] shall never prevail. But, notwithstanding, the concurrent testimony in behalf of christianity, which naturally arises from those writings, is always to be valued and esteemed by those who sincerely embrace the gospel. I have therefore in my first chapter endeavoured to prove that the writings of the *Old Testament* contain a history full of truth, and therefore to be relied on, and to be had, by us, on account of its veracity, in greater esteem than any other history in the world. And chiefly, because it gives us a more faithful account of the beginning, creation of all things, the fall, total degeneracy of mankind, the general flood, and the defection

defection of all men to vice and superstition after the flood, than any other book besides. I have therefore in my second chapter given my reader a view of the sins and idolatries of the whole world, as far as that history carries us, which is within an hundred and eighty years of Christ. From which state of the world, I have rationally endeavoured to account for the prophetic expectations of some good men, under the jewish œconomy, of a future revelation of the will of God. Which the reader will be fully convinced of in my third chapter.

THIS being premised, I then enter upon the validity of the writings of the *New Testament*; and though I have handled this subject very briefly: yet I judge, what I have here offered is sufficient to confirm and establish my reader in the high esteem he has always had of these sacred records of our most holy faith. For they appear credible
and

and well-attested, and are allowed to be valid both by the friends and enemies of christianity. I have in my fifth chapter fully shewn, that about the time of our Saviour's appearance, there was a general expectation of the coming of the Messiah, and that this was not confined to *Judea*, but spread itself over other distant countries. Before I enter upon shewing the internal excellence of the gospel, I thought it proper to add a short chapter in vindication of the doctrine of CHRIST'S divinity. I then lay down the three parts of proof in behalf of christianity. Which I hope will give my reader full satisfaction.

I HAVE, as a second part of this work, added a plain answer to *Grounds and Reasons*, &c. I hope the reader will also find it a full answer to the cavils and exceptions of that writer.

I HAVE

P R E F A C E.

I HAVE nothing more to add by way of PREFACE: I submit the whole to the judgment and candour of every sincere and impartial READER.

P A R T I.

General Vindication of Christianity.

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P A R T

N O C

I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO ADD BY
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ERRATA:

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LAYMAN'S

GENERAL

VINDICATION

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

ERRATA:

PAGE 42. l. 2. for was, read were. p. 42. in the note, l. 2.
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p. 442. l. 2. for his, read St. Paul's. l. 2. for appear, read appears.

PART

PART I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

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THE
INTRODUCTION.

Concerning REASON,

I. REASON. *The true notion of it stated, and its sole right and power of judgment asserted.* II. CHRIST and his apostles, in preaching christianity, did appeal to this immortal principle in man. III. The method of appeal to the souls, or reasons of men worthy of GOD. IV. Christianity tends to the perfection of our reasons. V. Cautions and positions.

AS introductory to my general design, the vindication of christianity; I premise what follows concerning REASON, as it stands apposed to REVELATION.

REASON. *The true notion of it stated, and its sole right and power of judgment asserted.*

WHAT the notion of reason is, which I am now about to state, will, with great ease and plainness, appear, if, in the first place, I briefly distinguish reason from its principal powers or faculties: which are, thinking, arguing, willing or resolving. These powers or faculties of reason have, at least, one of them, the power of argument, been always, by all persons of late ages, mistook for reason: reason being understood by them to be no more than a method or manner of disputing, arguing, or, as they frequently term it, of reasoning.

1. It will readily be allowed, that the power or faculty of thinking cannot lay the least claim to the character and title of reason; because thinking is a power, which must have its issue, rise and progress from some superior and more noble cause.

Which

Concerning REASON.

3

Which superior cause must be the occasion
and fountain of thought.

INTRO-
DUCT.

2. THE power or faculty of arguing cannot lay a just claim to the august character of reason. For it is evident to all considerate men, who have viewed and studied the nature of their immortal part, that this power of arguing is no more than a contention about something, of which a man must have formed some idea before, or he could not have argued. For if the faculties of thinking and argument be accounted reason: if, as it is common, these be called reasoning, it is plain, that thereby can be meant nothing more than a form or method of arguing, or disputing either with ourselves, or with others.

3. NOR can the power of willing or resolving challenge this character as its due. The act of will, or resolution, naturally is formed and concluded from the powers of thinking and arguing. Before a man can will the performance of any act, or conclude a resolution, which is an act of the will, he must be put upon making such

Which

B 2

will,

Concerning REASON.

4
INTRO- will, or resolve, by the powers of thought
DUCT. and argument. Some idea must first be
conceived. Which no sooner has its con-
ception, but it produces thought. This
dilates itself into argument. And the first
idea having passed this scrutiny, either ma-
turely or hastily, the will, or resolution,
takes place.

It therefore follows, that some inherent
essential quality in man alone deserves the
character of reason. I lay it down thus:

REASON is the origin of our thoughts:
it is the source of our thinking, the cause
whereby we are able to dispute and argue
what we think, and the rule or governour,
by which we are capable of making such na-
tural deductions and conclusions from what
we think, and argue, as we may safely rely
on.

As I take this to be the very truth, I af-
firm, that reason, in my sense, is the pure
intellect, or immortal soul, inhabiting or
indwelling the body of a man. No man
can say, that the soul in man cannot think,
argue,

argue, and deduct. So let reason be put INTRO-
for soul, and argument for the common DUCTU
use of the word, reason. And then the case
is this: the soul or immortal essence in man,
is his reason; or, if you please, it is his ra-
tional, immortal being.

THUS reason being the very soul of a
man: from reason or the soul arises an idea,
which no sooner has its rise, but it produces
a thought, this is argued, disputed, and can-
vassed; but reason all this while keeps its
place, and decides the controversy. And
indeed it is by virtue of this essential reason,
which is peculiar to every man, that we are
capable of thinking, arguing, or deducting.
If with our natural eyes we view an object,
it is the soul, or our immortal reason, or
mind that frames an idea, and argues and
disputes thereon. For instance: if we view
that glorious luminary the sun, and if this
viewing causes us to reflect upon its benefits.
Who, I pray, must be the prior cause of
such our viewing, or reflexion? must it not
be answered, that our reason, or soul, was
the prior cause of it; since the reflexion or
argument occasioned by this object, is no
more

INTRO. more than an act of reason, or soul; and
 DUCT. ought properly to be termed, arguing.

THAT the soul, or reason, of man is capable of itself, without the help of revelation, to draw and conclude some sure, certain, and just apprehensions of things, is a truth not to be denied by any person, or persons, who will be so frank as to own they can think, argue, or conclude at all.

OF this sort, I take to be the general and universal idea of a God among mankind, even when they might be supposed to be without any particular revelation, as touching this point. This grand truth was discoverable, I say, by virtue of man's rational powers; by a due consideration of created things; by arguments framed, and conclusions drawn by virtue of his soul.

AND it was the universal consent of all men, before the advent of God the Son, that there was a God. They likewise did frame several ideas concerning his being; yet they all seem to centre in this one, that he must be a Being of infinite goodness.

Concerning REASON.

7

INTRO-
DUCT.

THE apostle *Paul*, was of this opinion, that men are capable by a due attention to their reason, to discover several certain and general truths, although they be things whereof we can frame no absolute, perfect ideas. "For, *says he*, the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

I THINK, these words contain this positive assertion. That mankind, even since the beginning of the world, has, if they truly and sincerely addicted themselves thereto, been capable, by virtue of their reasons, to view, meditate on, and consider the works of nature, and from thence positively affirm, that there was some superior Agent, who was the author and contriver of all these things.

A MAN therefore is at no loss to know whether there be such a Being as we term God, or whether there is not. If he at any time appeals to his reason, (his soul) it will certainly inform him which is the truth. He

INTRAC. has no occasion to consult this book or that
 DVST. book, this author or that author, but di-
 rectly consult the great book which this Be-
 ing himself hath made. Let him view the
 wonderful harmony of the heavenly bodies, con-
 sider their unalterable method of action, the
 wonderful contexture of all the parts of
 the terrestrial globe, &c. and the no less ama-
 zing structure of his own being. All these
 will lead him to conclude, that there is a
 superior Agent who was the origin and cause
 of these things. And I venture to affirm, that
 by this method, a man may be as cer-
 tain there is an almighty Being, as though
 it were in never so wonderful and immediate
 a manner revealed to him. And this causes
 the apostle *Paul* to affirm, that the idolat-
 rous inhabitants of the world were *without*
excuse, and he assigns this argument for it,
Because that when they knew God, i. e. when
they had discovered by the visible things that
were created, that there was a God of eter-
nal power and goodness, which are invisible
things:] they glorified him not as God, neither
were thankful, i. e. they did not form such
worthy ideas and apprehensions of him,
which they were capable of conceiving,] but
became

Röm. i.
 20, &c.

Concerning REASON.

9

became vain in their imaginations, and their INTRO
foolish hearts was darkened, in length of DUCT
time, they grew vicious, and gave themselves
up to sin and iniquity, by which means, they
lost those glorious ideas they had of God,
and their minds became dark, and stupid,
in such manner as is unaccountable; } pro-
fessing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
in notwithstanding this, they boasted of
knowledge and wisdom, their very foolish-
ness, their ignorance, stupidity and conceit,
led them on to worse things: } they changed
the glory of the incorruptible God into an image,
changed the truth of God into a lie, i. e. from
a defection of truth to vice, from vice to
folly, till at last they worshipped the al-
mighty and immaterial Being, under the
symbols of men, birds, beasts and creeping
things: Being thus sunk in error, they pro-
ceeded to ascribe unto God things unworthy
of his very nature and essence: } and wor-
shipped and served the creature more than the
creator, i. e. to compleat their degeneracy,
they ascribed to one another, and to stocks
and stones, the attributes which only belong
to God: they substituted a worship to the
creatures, and worshipped these more than
God.

WHAT

INTRO-
DUCT.

WHAT I infer hence, is, 1. That the apostle supposes our reasons, or souls, sufficient to assure us that there is a God, and that He alone is to be worshipped. 2. He charges the heathens with being guilty of the breach of a duty, which is discoverable by virtue of our souls, or reasons.

Now as this is the case, it is plain, that our reasons (or souls) are proper judges in all cases, and that all men are capable by virtue thereof to think, to argue, and conclude things and ideas which are in themselves just and equitable.

AND consequently, that the reason, or soul of every man is a judge of this or that controversy, of this or that dispute, and particularly is concerned to determine whether christianity be a revelation from God, or an imposture. I say, the reason, or soul, of every man has a right to judge in these affairs. And though in his framing worthy and just ideas concerning God and truth, he may be assisted by the curious and attentive speculations of others, who addict themselves

selves more closely to consult their reasons, INTRO-
 or souls; yet I affirm, that before any man DUCT.
 can be benefited by their arguments, he
 must first conceive some idea thereof, raise
 some arguments thereon, and draw some
 natural conclusions or deductions, before he
 can solidly and firmly receive any benefit
 therefrom.

If this be not fact, we are capable of
 concluding no certain truths, no real notions
 and just apprehensions of any thing. We lie
 level with the brutes: nay, we are in far
 worse circumstances, our souls, or reasons,
 serve only to perplex and torment us, and
 to lead us into all manner of slavery, while
 they remain quiet and easy.

If it be urged, that this has been the case,
 It is granted. But I humbly conceive, that
 this does not in the least weaken my argu-
 ment. The objector is desired to distinguish
 reason from argument, to consider that rea-
 son in all ages of the world, and in none
 more than this, has always been obliged to
 give way to education, to custom and pre-
 judice. Besides, how many have laughed
 and

INTRO- and ridiculed its pure dictates, despised its
 DUCT: counsels, and been prejudiced in favour of
 specious arguments, invented and maintain-
 ed by persons who have pretended superior
 judgment to the rest of mankind; and there-
 by have deprived them of their own natu-
 ral right of judgment, by their authori-
 ty, name and dignity. It is not my pre-
 sent design, or I could shew, how all parts
 of rational knowledge has been clouded and
 obscured by the interested, and therefore
 specious arguments of designing men. On
 the other hand, if men had endeavoured to
 keep their reason entire, to have let it stand
 upon its own proper basis, I do not doubt
 but we had had many glorious instances of
 its force and vigor.

But yet, notwithstanding the degeneracy
 and depravity of the souls, or reasons of
 men, it is certain, that we are, at this day,
 capable of forming true and just ideas of
 things; and able to judge, whether a reve-
 lation in itself tends to our good, and to re-
 ceive it, because it is found upon a due exa-
 mination to be admirably suited thereto.

First then, Christ does appeal to this
 natural principle in men in these words:
 He

THE existence of a God, and his attributes may, though not perfectly, be attained by a due use of our rational beings: of these we can frame some certain ideas in themselves worthy of him; such as we may safely depend and rely on. And certainly, every man will consider a revelation proposed to him, and the ends and purposes it is to serve. If it tends to confirm those true and worthy ideas he has already imbibed, and is worthy of God for its author, then he will receive it.

SECT. II.

CHRIST and his apostles in preaching christianity, did appeal to this immortal principle in man.

THIS I shall touch but briefly, because a great deal is said of this in the body of this vindication; though it is not so obvious as what follows.

FIRST then, Christ does appeal to this immortal principle in men in these words:

“ He

INTRO- "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

DUCT. As though he had said, I appeal for the truth of what I assert to your own reasons, they are judges whether this is truth or not, or, at least, are capable of being such. If there be any man among you who listens to the dictates of his reason, or soul, he is the person that will embrace the principles which I preach, which principles are available to salvation.

And in another place it is said of him, John i. 11, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." In which words are contained these two things: 1. That the reception of the gospel is an act of the person preached to. 2. That there is in man a principle capable of receiving the gospel.

From hence it is plain, that Christ appealed to this principle: *He came, says John, asserting his divinity, and eternal Godhead, to his own, to those very beings who exist by his power; and his own received him not; although they owed their existence to him, and*
were

were capable of receiving his doctrine; but INTRO-
DUCT.
as many as received him, &c. to as many as imbibed his principles. Now to what end would such an appeal be, if mankind had not a quality inherent, capable of the reception here required. Our Lord, in these two instances, is recorded appealing to the soul, or reason of every person, as in itself a proper judge of the truth of what he preached.

FARTHER, when our Lord began his publick ministry, he appeals to the reasons of men: "Repent, says he, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Here I ask, Whether the soul, or the body repents? the answer is ready: the soul; the body being only a machine. It follows naturally, that Christ appealed to this immortal principle in man, when he urged upon them motives of repentance.

AGAIN, St. *Matthew* in the beginning of his fifth chapter, as introductory to our Lord's sermon on the mount, says, "And he opened his mouth, and taught them." Now how is it possible, that one person should teach another, and not by such an act
379W appeal

INTRO- appeal to something in those he was teach-
 DUCT. ing, that was capable of learning? It would
 be nonsense to talk *Greek* to a man who under-
 stands only the *English* tongue; but it
 would be highly ridiculous to expect that he
 should be edified by what the *Grecian* spoke:
 as ridiculous would it be to suppose, that
 our Lord undertook to teach persons those
 principles, or doctrines, for the reception
 of which, they wanted the internal qualities
 which are pre-requisite thereto.

THE plain meaning of these words, is
 this: our Lord argued with, and appealed
 to them, he inculcated, and evidenced his
 principles in words to the same import, as
Matthew has recorded in his fifth and two
 following chapters.

THE apostles and others appeal to the
 reasons of men in their propagation of chri-
 stianity. *St. Stephen*, being accused of blas-
 phemy, and having permission to make his
 defence, begins it with these words: "Men,
 "brethren and fathers hearken." Here he
 calls upon the reason of every person then
 present to judge in his cause: he appeals to
 them,

them, and lays before them the whole jewish history. He certainly knew, that they were capable of receiving the doctrine he preached; otherwise, I judge, it would have been to no purpose to have preached, or to have defended himself, as he did.

ST. Peter in *Acts* viii. 37. appeals to the reasons of men in these words: "That word (I say) you know, which was published throughout all *Judea*, and began from *Galilee*, &c." Paul being at *Antioch* in the synagogue there, after the reading of the law and the prophets, stood up and said, "Men of Israel — give audience:" *i. e.* let your reasons, or souls, attend to the subject I am now going to speak on.

MANY other such-like instances might be produced from the *Acts*, and all the *Epistles*, to evidence this grand truth, that the apostles did in their arguings with men, appeal to an essential quality in man which was capable of judging in the affair. And that this could be no other than his soul, or rational substance, if I may so term it, is not to be disputed.

INTRO-
DUCT.

SECT. III.

THE method of appeal to the souls, or reasons of men worthy of GOD.

THAT it is a thing worthy of God to appeal to the souls or reasons of men, in order to establish a new revelation, and to bring about the redemption, is altogether agreeable with those attributes which we ascribe to the Deity.

WE say, that the Author of nature, is the God of peace; that he is the essential peace. As this is undoubtedly the true character of the Author of our beings; so it must be confessed, that he did in delivering the gospel, and in bringing mankind to the reception of it, take the most quiet and peaceable method. This I affirm to be by a due appeal to our souls, who in these, and all other cases, as I have already proved, are the sole and proper judges.

To illustrate and prove this proposition, I take notice of Christ's method of introducing

ducing his will. The words were: " Re- INTRO-
 " pent, for the kingdom of heaven is at DUCT.
 " hand." To this he added: acts of mer-

cy and compassion toward all manner of sick and diseased people in *Galilee* and *Syria*. Our Lord in the words cited, appeals to men as the proper judges of his doctrine, *i. e.* he appealed to the souls, or reasons, of men. He reasons or argues with them, *Repent*, says he, and then subjoins why, *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. Here is nothing of carnal force in the words; but are evidently words of argument and persuasion, an appeal to men themselves, advice to them to abandon those narrow notions and ideas of things, those selfish opinions that all mankind were possessed with, and to imbibe generous and worthy apprehensions of the nature of the divine essence, true principles of charity, and a steady desire of salvation.

AND as men were proper judges, or, as I may say, were, by virtue of their souls, wholly capable of judging of, and receiving the glad tidings of salvation; or in other words, the principles of JESUS, (though

INTRO- all did not): so likewise these persons were
 DUCT. capable of judging, by the same internal,
 essential power, whether the miracles which
 Christ then wrought, upon the first publi-
 cation of his gospel, were really such. The
 inhabitants of *Galilee* and *Syria* were proper
 judges: they were sure that Christ miracu-
 lously cured their sick, and healed their
 maimed. They were certain he used no art,
 they saw him with the touch of his hand, or
 word of his mouth, cure the most inveterate
 distempers; such as they knew had been of
 many years continuance, and had baffled
 the physician's skill.

To shew the inherent right of every
 single person to such a way of receiving
 truth, our Lord himself calls upon every
 person to give attention, "Who that hath
 "ears to hear, let him hear." I need not
 here inform the reader, how often our Lord
 appeals to men as the proper judges of his
 doctrine and miracles; if he is in the least
 acquainted with the four *Gospels*, he cannot
 but remark this himself.

AND

AND that this should be the method by which Christ introduced good principles, or his gospel, among men, is easily to be concluded : for had he instead of using this method of appeal, by argument and persuasion, used methods of force and compulsion, in order to have established his doctrines; it follows, that then mankind would not have been left at liberty freely to have choose and embraced the principles of truth and salvation. But, it is certain, men would have been compelled by force, by fire and sword, by all manner of tortures and deaths, and so have been obliged to have received the gospel.

HAD such a method of force been followed, and had Christ made use of carnal power and weapons to induct and establish his gospel, what unworthy ideas would men have formed both of him, of God, and of his religion. Such a procedure would have been contrary to the peaceable idea we had formed of God: which if true, as it certainly is, would have justified men in rejecting both Christ and his doctrine.

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COULD we suppose, Christ conquering by force, not argument, how many cities must he have laid siege to, and how many would have been sufferers in the several fights there must have happened between him, his followers, and the rest of the world. In short, such a method of propagating a revelation is contrary to all the ideas we are capable of forming concerning the nature of the divine Essence, whose title is, THE GOD OF PEACE.

ON the other hand: how agreeable to, and consonant with, such an idea of God, is the method Christ took in propagating his gospel. The method was: by an appeal to the soul of every man, by argument and persuasion: for no man was compelled to receive the gospel by any other means, than that of conviction.

I URGE farther, that the doctrines and principles of the gospel could not be established by any other method, besides that of a due appeal to the reason of every person, by argument and persuasion. This is evident

evident from the nature of them. I instance INTRO-
DUCT.
in two: the doctrine of universal love and charity, and the immortality of the soul: doctrines in themselves peaceable, and must be propagated in a method of peace. He that will receive them, may receive them; but he that will not receive them, cannot be forced to receive them by oppression and violence: methods contrary to the will of God, to the principles of the gospel, and to the freedom of men.

THESE doctrines tend to the good of the world, and the peace of society. This needs no proof to those who are so happy as to imbibe them: but the question is, whether it is possible to propagate them by fire and sword? I answer: our Lord assures us, that "he that takes the sword, shall perish by the sword:" intimating, that the doctrines of christianity cannot be propagated by carnal force. So that another method of propagation, more agreeable to these doctrines, must be followed: according to that of our Saviour; "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples: if ye have love one to another:" declaring,

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that

INTRO- that his disciples should live in amity and
 DUCT. friendship: not offering any injury or violence to any person in their proselyting the world to christianity. Upon the whole, it does follow: that the quiet and peaceable method of appeal to the immortal essence in man, is worthy of God; the proclaimer of our salvation and restoration; as he is the Author of love and immortality. I add: it is a method compatible with all his attributes, his mercy, his justice, his love, and the like.

Luke ix.
1—5.

I SUBJOIN, that as our Lord took this quiet method of appeal to the reasons of men; so he ordered the first preachers of the gospel to do likewise. St. Luke says, that he sent forth the twelve *to preach the kingdom of God*; and particularly cautions them, that they should not, in their preaching the gospel, offer violence to any person: for as men are left entirely at their liberty either to receive the gospel, or not receive it; so when they left any house or city, wherein the inhabitants would not receive their doctrine, he only bids them *shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony*

mony against them. Again: our Lord after his resurrection, when he enlarged their commission, said: *Go, and teach all nations:* not, go, and force all nations to receive the gospel: but, Go, and by an appeal to the reasons of men, by argument and persuasion bring them into, and instruct them in the doctrines and principles ye have received from me. To which command, agrees the assertion of St. Paul, *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual*, i. e. the method of propagating christianity, is an appeal to the spirit or reason of every person.* And if this does not succeed, force must not take place. The first may gain votaries to truth: but the latter, none, it is certain, but those who were obliged by violence, or through fear of death, would even give it their oral assent.

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SECT. IV.

CHRISTIANITY tends to the perfection of our reasons.

I SHALL be very brief on this head, because it will be found hereafter to be more largely

INTRO- largely insisted on. I here just mention a
DUCT. few particulars.



It is apparent from our Lord's sermon on the mount, that such ideas and principles as these, are there inculcated, viz. That God is no respecter of persons; that he is a beneficent Being of infinite goodness, power and knowledge; and that he is the common parent of all men: that all mankind should practice virtue, and eschew vice; should do all things in their power to succour and support each other; and that every man should love his neighbour as himself: lastly, that man should not regard, nor be solicitous for the riches and honours of this life; but, that they must prefer the means whereby they shall be admitted into the kingdom of heaven.

Now, that these principles tend to the perfection of rational beings, cannot be questioned by those who give themselves the least consideration and reflexion: suppose then, for instance, I sincerely love the society, or whole body of mankind, of which I am a member; it is very certain, I would

not

not be guilty of such acts as these : oppression, fornication, adultery, and the like. Sins which in themselves sensualize and bound, environ, and straiten the soul, destroy the peace of society, and introduce the utmost disorder and confusion. The contrary virtues will have a quite different turn, they will enlarge the capacities of the soul, and render it brisk and lively in pursuit of the pleasures those principles afford, which alone are available to salvation. And as they will be of such use to every particular man, so will they introduce peace, love harmony, and an entire concord among all mankind.

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As this is the case, that the principles of christianity do tend to our happiness here and hereafter, it follows that they are worthy of our assent and consent.

I SHALL only add, that christianity is a rational system of principles. I conclude, the apostle means so, when he says, " which " is your reasonable service." That is, the principles or doctrines of Christ, are such only which will be found, by a due examination

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mination made by the soul, or reason of man, to be highly agreeable thereto. And which upon that account lays the strongest claim to our assent and consent.

SECT. V.

CAUTIONS and positions.

THUS have I done what I proposed. I have stated my notion of reason, shewn that it is capable of judging in all cases. I do not intend to give offence. It is not my design to raise scruples to puzzle and perplex my reader. I have offered nothing but what has occurred to myself, and what is pertinent to the design in the scripture.

I. I DECLARE, I do not assert, that reason is far superior to faith: but that reason, or the soul, is a fit and proper judge, what it ought to receive as truth, and as a revelation worthy of God, and what not. Faith is offered, by the peaceable and quiet method of appeal, to reason, (*i. e.* to soul) and not reason to faith.

2. I HAVE proved, that Christ and his apostles, in preaching christianity, appealed to this immortal, essential principle in man. By which I would not be understood, to have endeavoured to destroy the doctrine of the inspiration of the holy scriptures; but only to assert, that reason, or soul, is appealed to, as the sole and proper judge of its truth and credibility; and, whether the doctrines and principles therein contained are worthy of God.

3. I BRIEFLY proved, that the method of appeal to the reasons of men is worthy of God; and, that this is the only method which Christ and his apostles took in propagating the gospel. It is not my design to insinuate, that the civil power ought not to punish or restrain those who insult and ridicule the gospel: or, that they should not countenance and protect its votaries. No; far be it from me. I only affirm, that the soul or reason of a man, being capable of the reception of the principles of christianity, must receive it by conviction, and not by compulsion.

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4. I HAVE briefly shewn, that the principles of christianity tend to the perfection of our reason, and consequent of this, they are worthy of our assent and consent. By which I would not be understood to abolish the divine sanction by which the doctrines of christianity are enforced, but to assert, that every man ought voluntarily to lay hold of the terms of redemption, principally because they tend to his perfection and restoration, and then thankfully embrace them as a revelation given by God. For if a man is good he doth not benefit God, nor add one ray to his glory; nor can the blasphemer diminish from it.

I ADD to this, If the facts related by *Moses*, and by the evangelists, do appear to have in them all the marks and evidences of truth and credibility, every man, by a due attention to the dictates of his soul, or reason, will easily discover whether they be such or not.

HERE then, the whole doctrine of christianity, the occasion of its promulgation,
and

and the many miracles and stupendous works wrought in favour of it, is humbly submitted to the judgment of the soul, or immortal reason of every man. And I am certain, that if any doctrines or facts ever did lay claim to the assent and consent of the soul of man, these do in a more especial manner. The doctrines of christianity are evidenced by their internal excellency, and the relation of the miracles and mighty deeds wrought by Christ, have such external marks of credibility in their history, as are not to be paralleled.

INTRO-
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and the many miracles and labors of works that
he has done for the family of man.
The Lord has given us a world of knowledge
and the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us
in all our ways. We are to be obedient to his
commands and to love him with all our heart,
mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor
as ourselves. We are to be faithful in all
our duties and to be diligent in our studies.
We are to be kind and merciful to all men
and to be patient with those who are weak
and erring. We are to be pure in heart
and to be without guile. We are to be
loving and kind to all men, as the Lord
loves us. We are to be faithful in all
our duties and to be diligent in our studies.
We are to be kind and merciful to all men
and to be patient with those who are weak
and erring. We are to be pure in heart
and to be without guile. We are to be
loving and kind to all men, as the Lord
loves us.

THE
 Layman's VINDICATION
 OF
 CHRISTIANITY.

CHAP. I.

The Validity of the WRITINGS of
 the OLD TESTAMENT.

- I. THE *agreement of Moses and beathen authors concerning the being of a GOD, the creation, and the beginning of all things.*
 II. *Of the deluge.* III. *Of the mosaic law.* IV. *Of the writings of the prophets.*

THE position proposed, is, that
Moses's history, and the writings
of the prophets and other histo-
rians of the Old Testament do
 contain matters of fact that are well-attest-
 ed,

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I.

ed, and that have in them evidences of truth and certainty. They are witnessed to by heathen writers, who have wrote concerning those facts as well as *Moses*. And to which we may very justly add : the discoveries we ourselves have made, and are able to make, by virtue of our reasons, (our souls) of the truth of several facts related by *Moses*.

AND, if upon examination these writings shall be found to have in them evident marks of credibility, then we may safely rely upon their authority : and from thence take a view of the world, both jews and heathens ; and see, if there were not sufficient grounds to expect, that God would reveal himself to men. We will therefore enquire, what evident marks and tokens of credibility appear in *Moses's* history, and in the writings of the jews contained in the *Old Testament* ; in order to determine, whether it be a credible and well-attested history. And this shall be done with as much brevity as possible, that it may with ease and pleasure be retained.

S E C T.

SECT. I.

THE agreement of Moses and heathen authors concerning the being of a GOD, the creation and beginning of all things.

MOSES in his history tells us, That
 “ in the beginning God created the heaven Gen. i. 1,
 “ and the earth. And the earth was with-^{&c.}
 “ out form and void; and the Spirit [*a*
 “ most vehement (*a*) wind] moved upon
 “ the face of the waters. ” And hav-
 ing delivered the matter of fact in these
 words, he then proceeds to particulars, and
 says, “ that God in the beginning, [after
 “ he had digested chaos into form] created
 “ light, and darkness, called the one day,
 D 2 “ the

(*a*) The hebrew word *Ruach* ought to be rendered,
 A MOST VEHEMENT WIND, instead of THE SPIRIT.
 Moses's narration stands in need of this reading. For
 otherwise, through the whole history he has given us
 of the creation, there is not the least mention of the
 creation of wind. So the latter part of the second
 verse of the first chapter of *Genesis* will read thus :
 “ And A MOST VEHEMENT WIND moved upon the
 “ face of the waters.” Several arguments might be
 offered to support this reading.

PART "the other night, made the firmament

I. "and divided the waters, fixed two great
 "lights in the firmament of heaven, the sun
 "and the moon, created all trees, four-foot-
 "ed beasts, and all creeping things, and
 "last of all man."

THIS in short, is his history of the crea-
 tion, or the beginning of the world. There
 is no improbability in this account. He
 does not say, that God made the world out
 of nothing. He intimates to us, that there
 was a pre-existent chaos: we may suppose
 the chaos, or confused mass of earth, was
 made by him many ages before the time
 wherein he digested it, by his almighty
 power, into that beautiful order, in which
 we now see and behold it.

THE matter of fact as it stands related by
Moses, has in it all the marks of demonstra-
 tion.

1. HE asserts, That there is an almighty
 essence, pre-existent to chaos, and to the
 creation.

2. HE

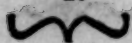
2. HE ascribes to this self-existent Being, CHAP.
the creation of heaven and earth, even of I.
that chaos which atheistical men, have as-
serted to have digested itself into form. For
says he, " In the beginning God created the
heaven and the earth. And the earth was
without form and void." *i. e.* God created
the heaven and the chaos.

3. HE having attributed this act to an
almighty Agent, he proceeds then to ascribe
to him the particular formation of the world
out of that chaos he had some time before
created. And this is related in so beautiful
an order, that the history of it bears all the
marks of truth, which are possible an ac-
count can have.

THE ancient heathens bare testimony to
this matter of fact, that there was a begin-
ning of the world. It was an old tradition
among them, that the world was created
out of a chaos. As they were of opinion that
the world was created : this very opinion ac-
knowledges a Creator. For if a thing be
made, the thing so made demonstrates an
author.

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HESIOD the Greek poet makes mention of a chaos in his *Theogonia*, and says, “ that
 “ first of all things there was a chaos : and
 “ that from chaos proceeded hell (b) and
 “ night.” *Ovid* in his *Metamorphosis* mentions a chaos (c), *Aristophanes* (d) and *Lucan* (e) were of the same opinion concerning a chaos. *Euripides* gives a more full and particular account of the formation of the world out of chaos. He says, “ That at
 “ first the heaven and the earth were only
 “ of one form, and that afterwards they
 “ were separated, the earth produced trees,
 “ beasts, birds, fishes and man (f).” *Anaxagoras* in his account of the formation of the world out of chaos, tells us, “ Mind supervening disposed them into a beautiful order.”

(b) Ἦτοί μὲν πρῶτις αὖ Χάος γένετ’.

Ἐκ Χάος δ’ Ἔρεβος τε, μέλαινα τε Νύξ
 ἐγένοντο. Hesiod.

(c) Quem dixere Chaos, rudis indigestaque moles,
 &c. Ovid. Met.

(d) Χάος ἦν καὶ Νύξ, κ. λ. Aristoph.

(e) Antiquum reperent iterum Chaos omnia, &c.
 Lucan.

(f) Ὁ δ’ Οὐρανὸς καὶ γαῖα, τ’ ἦν μορφή μία.
 Ἐπεὶ δ’ ἐχρηίσθησαν ἀλλήλων, κ. λ.

“ der (g).” By this Mind, we are to understand God, and the words signify, that an omnipotent Being did, out of this chaos, create and form the world into a beautiful order. *Aristotle*, though he asserted the eternity of the world, says, “ That all those “ philosophers who had writ before him, “ were of opinion, that the world was “ made. (b)” *Aristotle*’s opinion of the eternity of the world, is mere romance, and hath neither foundation in history, nor tradition. For it is certain, there was among the politer heathens, the *Egyptians*, *Phœnicians* and *Chaldeans*, &c. a universal tradition concerning the beginning and creation of all things. These philosophers delivered the traditions of their fathers, and were not beholden to the jews, or the writings of *Moses*, for the light they had in this matter. It is with very little or no force of argument affirmed, that the account these philosophers give of the creation, was transcribed from the writings of *Moses*, because

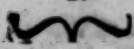
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they

(g) Πάντα χρήματα ἦν ὁμοῦ· εἴτα Νοῦς ἐλθὼν αὐτὰ διεκόσμησε. *Anaxag.*

(b) Γενόμενον μὲν οὖν ἅπαντες εἶναί φασιν. *Arist.*
de cælo, l. 1. c. 10.

PART they are so consonant with his relation,

I.  Were not others then, as well as *Moses*, capable to deliver tradition concerning these things to their generations? yes, certainly, and that without so much as having ever conversed with a jew. For it was, among the heathens, an ancient tradition long before *Moses's* time, even from the beginning of the world, that there was an almighty Being, who was the Author of all things. The reader is not to understand by the term heathen, a man who denied a God, or that there was a being præ-existent to creation, who was the efficient cause of the universe. A heathen, is a superstitious worshipper of God under the symbols of men, fish, sun, &c. So that it is even consonant with the true notion of a primitive heathen, that they were capable of delivering a tradition, though in many instances very fabulous, in some degree to be depended on, concerning these things, although they were fallen into vice and superstition. *Thales* (b) the philosopher delivers it as his opinion, that God was the first cause or maker of all things, tho' he

(b) Aquam dixit esse initium, Deum autem eam mentem quae ex aqua cuncta fingeret. Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. 1. c. 25.

he makes the water to be the material principle. And it does appear from *Diogenes Laertius*, that the *Egyptians* did constantly and universally believe that the world had a beginning. His vouchers are, *Hecataeus* and *Aristagoras*. If so, there were men in *Moses's* time, who believed that the world was made, and they attributed its creation to an almighty Essence.

CHAP.
I.

THE agreement betwixt *Moses* and these writers is very conspicuous. *Hesiod* says, there was a chaos. *Moses* that the earth was without form and void. Which is one and the same thing. *Euripides* in particular says, that the heaven and the earth were separated, and that the earth produced trees, birds, &c. *Moses*, that God formed out of the earth all trees, herbs, animals, &c. But *Anaxagoras* in particular says, that (A) MIND supervening disposed all things into a beautiful order. *Moses* that God created the heaven

(A) The word *Noûs* here made use of by this philosopher affirms, that a præ-existent MIND, BEING, or ALMIGHTY ESSENCE, was the CAUSE of the creation, or formation of matter into form. This is the positive opinion of *Anaxagoras*.

PART heaven and the earth. And said, let there

I. be light, let the earth bring forth herbs, trees, &c. Let us make man, &c. The general consent of philosophers that the world was made, and that it was made by a deity. *Moses*, that God created the earth and every thing visible and invisible.

THERE is still another instance behind, wherein *Moses* and some heathen writers do entirely agree. *Moses* relating the creation of man, says, “ that he was formed out “ of the dust of the ground, and that God “ breathed into him the breath of life, and “ he became a living soul, ” *Gen.* ii. 7. And that his name was *Adam*, ver. 19. The *Greeks* have no termination in *M*, therefore when they spake of *Adam*, they called him *Adan*, from *’Adavds*, which word signifies, *the son of heaven and earth*. This they received from the universal tradition which had been handed down to them by their forefathers. And from hence it does appear, that *Moses*, and they were of one and the same Opinion in their accounts of the origin of the first man. The one that God formed his body, or material form, out of the earth ;

earth; the other, that he was the son of the CHAP.
earth: The one, that he received his spiri- I.
tuality from God, he breathing into that
body he had formed out of the earth, the
breath of life. The other, that the first
man was the son of heaven.

FROM which agreement of *Moses* and
these authors arises this grand position,
namely, that it was the opinion of the an-
cient heathens that there was a chaos, and
that that chaos was digested by an almighty
power into beauty and order, and caused to
produce all things, and likewise man.^d It
farther appears, that the heathens were of
opinion, that the first man, as to his soul,
was a son of heaven. And thus far they
entirely agree with our historian *Moses*.
And I think we may look upon this part of
Moses's history to be matter of fact, without
any farther inquiry, and as such to be re-
ceived by us.

FOR nothing is more certain, than that
this history of the creation given to us by
Moses, is a true relation of the most authen-
tic tradition that had obtained in his days;
and

PART and had been handed down to him by his
 I. progenitors, even from *Adam*.

AND indeed, if we were to reflect upon the great defect of heathen tradition, and the sufficiency of the mosaic, we might see cause sufficient to satisfy us, that *Moses's* account is to be relied on. If to this we add, that all the world, except a few, soon after the flood, gave themselves over to fable and superstition: that person, or persons, who did not thus bewilder themselves, as we are assured *Moses* and the patriarchs did not, were the only person, or persons, from whom future ages might reasonably expect the most just narratives of the creation and beginning. And this will hold good in all other relations given us by *Moses*.

THAT the matter of fact, in relation to the beginning of all things, delivered by him, was always from his time till the coming of CHRIST, received as truth, appears from a jewish writer of great authority. *Josepbus*, in his *Antiquities*, begins his first book with an account of the creation of the world,

BE-

BESIDES, nothing is more certain, than that any man might, from a consideration of the wonderful contexture of all the parts of the creation, and from his own form in particular, justly conclude, that there must be an almighty Agent, who was the author and contriver of these things. And if a man would give himself time to reflect after this manner, he would perceive in *Moses's* history of the beginning of the world, such ideas, as would lay claim to his assent. He would readily conclude, with *Moses*, that there was a God, and that this God was the author of all created things, whether visible or invisible. And this evidence of truth, amounts even to a demonstration. Every single created thing in the universe, and man in particular demonstrate an almighty Author, and consequently, a beginning. It is plain that all sublunary things are temporary, and therefore must owe their existence from some other cause than themselves. To suppose, with *Spinoza* and others, that the wild chaos digested itself into order, and spontaneously produced all creatures, man as well as beast, is so absurd, that, I am persuaded,

no

PART no man, who makes the least appeal to his
I. rational power, can look upon to amount
 to so much as a seeming probability, much
 less a demonstration. Therefore the result
 of every man must be, that this part of *Moses's*
history, is matter of fact.

SECT. II.

Of the deluge.

MOSES gives us an account of a flood
 of waters that destroyed all men, save *Noah*,
 his wife, and his sons and daughters. The
 whole history the reader will find, at length,
 in the sixth, and three following chapters of
Genesis.

THE probability of this story appears
 from two things. The first, the death of
Noah. The second, the birth or time of
Moses.

I. *NOAH* is said to have lived nine hun-
 dred and fifty years, and to have died about
 the year of the world two thousand and six.
 He was near six hundred years old when the
 flood

flood came upon the earth: he lived afterwards three hundred and fifty years. *Shem*, *Ham* and *Japhet*, who all knew this occurrence, might live, two of them at least, longer, or nearer the time of *Moses*. These persons were undoubtedly, constantly telling their posterity of this wonderful event. *Noah* lived till the year 2006. *Abraham* was born about that time; so that the story must be fresh among his brethren, or the men of that age; and *Abraham* being a worshipper of God, or one of those that did not give themselves over to fable and superstition, may be supposed to have received from his father *Terah*, a true narrative of the deluge, and to have delivered a faithful account of it to *Isaac* his son, and *Isaac* to *Jacob*, and *Jacob* to his posterity.

2. *MOSES*, *Ex. ii. 1.* is said to be born about the year 2433. that is, 427 years after the death of *Noah*, *Abraham* lived one hundred seventy five years, and communicated this history to the men of his time. *Isaac* his son must be well acquainted of this history. And *Jacob* receiving it from his father, the sons of *Jacob* must be true and faithful

PART faithful historians, and *Amrames* * the father of *Moses* might be the very person from whom he received his narrative of the creation. The space of time from the death of *Abraham* to the birth of *Moses*, is not more than two hundred fifty two years. From the death of *Jacob*, who died A. M. 2315, to *Moses* are but an hundred and eighteen years. A faithful history of this deluge delivered by *Jacob* to his sons not many years above a century before the birth of *Moses*, could not be lost. Many of the sons of *Jacob* lived within fifty or sixty years of the birth of *Moses*. *Amrames*, the father of *Moses*,

* *Amrames the father of Moses.*] He is not by name mentioned in holy writ. It does appear from *Exodus* i. 1. that his father was of the tribe of *Levi*. And his descent stands there recorded in this manner: "And there went a man of the house of *Levi*,
"and took to wife a daughter of *Levi*. And the
"woman conceived, and bare a son." This is the short account the scripture gives us of the descent and birth of this great MAN. *Josephus*, in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, says, that the name of *Moses's* father was *Amrames*, and that he was of the tribe of *Levi*. Vid. *Antiq.* l. 1. And this we may credit, because *Josephus* was descended of the race of the priests, and was himself a priest. *In vit.*

Moses, often heard his father, who was perhaps one of *Jacob's* sons, tell the story of the deluge. He told it to *Moses*. *Moses* perceiving, that in length the history of the creation, and of the deluge, might be totally lost, or fabulously received, committed them to writing, to preserve them from corruption. And we may be assured of the truth of this story, upon these reasons, if we could not find, that any other author besides, had mentioned it. *Josephus* vindicating this story says, that *Berosus*, the *Chaldean* relating the story of the deluge, affirms, that it was confidently reported, that some part of the ark was remaining on the mountain of the *Gordyæans*, and that certain persons carried away the pitch, and some used it for amulets, and to cure diseases (i). *Josephus* in the same place mentions several others, as *Nicolaus Damascenus*, *Hieronymus* the *Egyptian*, *Mnaseus*, and several others, who testify the credit of this event, (the deluge.)

NOAH, the man who made this ark,
and who lived in it, during the flood, was
E deified

(i) *Joseph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 3.*

PART deified in after-ages by the heathen people.

I.

We are assured from *Moses*, that *Noah* was the first man who planted a vineyard, and who made wine, and drank of it, *Gen. ix. 20, 21.* From hence they called him *Bacchus*, the god of wine, and paid divine honours to him under the image of a drunken man, because he was the first inventer of this liquor. All nations worshipped him, except the *Scythian*, it seeming ridiculous to this people, that a deity should be revered, that made men fools and mad. And in this manner *Noah's* memory as the first planter of a vineyard was preserved.

It appears from scripture that after the deluge, *Noah* was the father of all men, for there was no more in being, at that time, besides, he, his wife, his three sons and his three daughters: all begotten by him of his wife, *Gen. vi. 7. vii. 23. viii. 15, 16.*

Saturn, under whom *Noah* also was commemorated among the heathen nations, was stiled, the common parent of all men. *Noah* is said to be a just and perfect man in his generation, *Gen. vi. 9.* *Saturn*, a just king.

THE

THE heathens fable, that in the days of *Saturn*, there was but one language among men, and call his reign, the golden age. This is true of our *Noah*. The confusion of languages at *Babel*, happened not in his days. So that from the flood to the building of *Babel*, was the time wherein there was but one language spoke by all nations. They lived under the government of *Noah* in peace, unity and concord. In his days they were not scattered over the face of the earth. There was no contentions among men, no war, no sorrow, nor no distress of any kind. This was the golden age so much extolled by philosophers. No time since the dispersion of nations, and the confusion of tongues can be fixed upon for this glorious age, all men are agreed. *Saturn* therefore was the heathen *Hieroglyphic* in memory of *Noah*.

BESIDES, these people preserved the memory of *Noah* under several other names, as *Prometheus*, whose name signifies a man of forecasse and wisdom; such as *Noah* had, whereby he predicted the general flood; *Janus*, whose name alludes to a person who

PART first planted vines, and the philosophers

I. painted him with two faces, because they ascribed to him, the knowledge of the destruction of the old world, and the beginning of the new; and say, that he lived many years before the flood, and many years after; *Deucalion*, because he was the first inventor of ships, &c.

AND, as to the probability of *Moses's* history of the creation, and of the flood; it is manifest, that the oral tradition of these events passed from *Adam* to *Seth* and *Methuselah*, from *Methuselah* to *Noah*, from *Noah* to *Shem*, from *Shem* to *Terah*, from *Terah* to *Abraham*, from *Abraham* to *Isaac*, from *Isaac* to *Jacob*, from *Jacob* to his twelve sons, from one of these sons to *Amrames* the father of *Moses*, and from *Amrames* to *Moses*, who committed to writing the faithful tradition of these events, which he had received from his fathers, that a just record thereof might be handed down to the succeeding generations. This record *Moses* delivered to the *Levites* whose proper office and charge it was to take care of the ark of the covenant, and commanded them, that

that they should lay it up on the side of the CHAP. I.
ark of the covenant of the Lord, *Deut.*
xxx. 25, 26. And the jews tell us, that
it remained there till the final destruction of
their temple and city by *Vespasian*. The
conveyance of this tradition from *Adam* to
Moses, was handed down by ten men, all
persons of probity, great skill and know-
ledge (B). All these were true worshippers
of God.

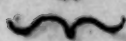
HAD the history of these things been the
invention of *Moses*, it would have been
easy, at that time, to have convicted him

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of

(B) This is the character the scripture gives of them.
Adam, the first man, was made by God himself, he
formed his body out of the dust of the earth, and
breathed into it a living soul, *Gen. ii. 7.* And we are
assured, *Gen. i. 26.* that he was created after the like-
ness of God. This likeness consisted in goodness, in
wisdom, and knowledge. It is evident, *Adam* was a
very great man, and the capacities of his soul were
very extensive, even after he fell. *Seth*, his son, was
begotten by him, after his likeness, *Gen. v. 3.* which
intimates that he was a great man. And, indeed, from
this righteous person, descended the family, who in
after-ages were the only true worshippers of God. *Me-
huselah,*

PART of falshood and imposition. But as his re-

I.  lation of this tradition was the most just and authentic, we find that jews, heathens and christians have ever since received it as such. Those jews, who were *Moses's* contemporaries, knew, and were as well acquainted with, the universal tradition concerning the being of a God, the beginning of the world, the creation of all things visible and invisible, and of the event of the deluge, as *Moses*: they received the story from the very persons that *Moses* received it from. And it does not appear, through the whole *Pentateuch*, that *Moses*, in the least, hints, that his account of these things

was
thuselah, the son of righteous *Enoch*, was a great and good man. And he may justly be affirmed to be so, because he lived longer than any man, *ver.* 27. *Noah*, was a just and perfect man in his generations, *Cb.* vi. 9. *Shem*, the son of *Noah*, was also a just man, *Cb.* x. 1. *Terah*, the father of *Abraham*, was a good man, *Cb.* xi. 30. *Abraham* is stiled, the father of the faithful, and God is said to have conversed with him, *Cb.* xii. xvii. xviii. *Isaac* and *Jacob* bare very great characters, *Cb.* xxvi. 1, &c. xxvii. 13, 20. *Amram*, the father of *Moses*, may be supposed to be a very just and good man, *Exod.* ii. 1. *Moses*, our historian, was the meekest man, and a man of great wisdom and policy, *Numb.* xii. 3.

was a novelty, and as such was never heard of before by his own countrymen. His only design was, to preserve the memory of these events, that future ages might receive a full account of them, pure and uncorrupt. It might be observed, in order to prove, *Moses's* account of the creation, and of the flood, nothing novel to the men of his time, that *Moses* did not particularly enjoin them the belief of these things; which plainly shews, that *Moses* knew they universally received and believed these facts. Nor did he introduce them in the same manner and form he did the law. The first he delivers in a historical way: the latter, as a lawgiver, and as immediately from God himself. His constant method of introducing the law, which he delivered to the *Israelites* by parts, and at several times, was this: "the Lord said unto me, thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel." But no such expressions occur to introduce and establish the history of the creation and deluge. From all which considerations, I affirm, that those *Israelites*, who lived at the same time with *Moses*, were proper judges of the truth of his history, and as such received it,

PART and deposited it on the side of the ark, not
I. to persuade themselves of the truth of what they were convinced of before, but to deliver a faithful record concerning these things to posterity, that they might not be lost, or fabulously received and believed. This was the only intention of *Moses* in writing this record, and the only design of him and his brethren in depositing it on the side of the ark.

I must add: that the *Chaldeans*, *Egyptians* and *Canaanites*, and the people of all the nations then in being, who were contemporaries with *Moses*, held an oral universal tradition concerning these events, viz. the creation of the world, and the deluge, which they received from *Adam* and *Noah*. *Noah* had three sons, *Shem*, *Ham* and *Japheth*.

Gen. ix.
19.

“ These are the three sons of *Noah*, and by these was the WHOLE EARTH OVER-SPREAD.” These three sons received the tradition of the creation from their father’s own mouth, and from several persons who lived before the flood, particularly from *Methuselah*. They were themselves eye-witnesses of the flood. They were equally

qually capable of delivering to their descen-
dants a faithful narrative of these things.

C H A P.

I.

Besides, their sons, and their sons sons undoubtedly, often heard *Noah* speak of the creation, of *Adam*, and of the patriarchs of the old world, and of the great flood of water. Therefore the tradition of *Ham*, was the same with those delivered by *Shem* and *Japheth*. So that from these men descended one oral universal tradition of the creation and deluge. Which tradition was universally received by their children. *Shem*, from whom *Abraham* descended, delivered this universal tradition to his sons, by which means *Terah* his father, was capable of delivering a faithful tradition to his sons, *Abraham*, *Nabor*, and *Haran*. It must be acknowledged, *Nabor*, and *Haran*, are therefore as good historians, as *Abraham*. *Abraham* we are told, after the death of *Terah* his father, left *Chaldæa* the place of his nativity, and went and dwelt in the land of *Canaan*. But it does not follow, because he left *Chaldæa*, that there remained no universal tradition of the creation and deluge among that people. For nothing can be more evident, than that there remained ma-

ny

PART ny persons, [all (c) persons] particularly Na-

I. *Nabor*, who was as capable to deliver the universal tradition of these things, which had been handed down to them from *Adam* and *Noah*, as *Abraham* was. Their knowledge of these things sprung from the same fountains. They had equal advantages. *Nabor* therefore among the *Chaldeans* was as faithful an historian as *Abraham* was to the *Israelites*. *Nabor* delivered this universal tradition to his children, as well as *Abraham*. The conclusion is, that the *Chaldeans* had, in *Moses's* time, a faithful tradition generally received by them concerning these two great events.

THE

(c) *All persons.*] That is, all the inhabitants of *Chaldaea*, men, women and children, received this oral universal tradition. They descended from *Arphaxad*, who received it from *Noah* his grandfather, and from *Shem* his father. The principal of them are recorded, *Gen. xi. 10. Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nabor, and Terab.* All these begat sons and daughters, *ver. 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25.* The sons of *Salah, Peleg, and Nabor*, were as well qualified to hand down an oral universal tradition, as *Abraham* who was the the son of *Terab*. This is evident to demonstration, and does appear to be real matter of fact from the history of *Moses*.

THE *Egyptians* had the very same advantages with the *Chaldeans*. *Mizraim*, the father of this people, was grandson to *Ham*, who was one of the sons of *Noah*. He received the tradition of the creation from persons who lived before the flood, particularly *Metbuselah*, and from his own father *Noah*. He was himself an eye-witness of the flood. On these accounts he was capable of delivering to *Mizraim* a faithful account of these things. Nay, *Mizraim* might have it from *Noah*, for *Noah* lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. *Mizraim* therefore did faithfully instruct his descendants, the *Egyptians*, in this oral universal tradition. These were a polite people. *Mizraim* founded his kingdom about A. M. 1816, one hundred sixty one years after the flood. The sons of *Mizraim* were faithful historians, and they transmitted this oral universal tradition to their children. The deduction is, that the *Egyptians* had in *Moses's* time a general and universal tradition concerning the creation and deluge, which tradition they received from *Adam* and *Noah*. The same may be said, with equal justice of the *Canaanites*,

PART

I

naanites, Kenites, Jebusites, Hittites, Perizzites, &c. who all received this oral tradition from one fountain.

WHAT I assert is, that all the people, [heathens as well as jews] who lived in the time of *Moses*, had one oral universal tradition concerning these great events. In after-ages they [the heathens] corrupted this tradition by adding fabulous stories, as circumstantial of it. *Moses*, foreseeing this would be the case, (perhaps, it was begun in his days) committed a faithful account of this oral universal tradition to writing, and so preserved it from corruption. By which means the jews had a true record of it; while all other people (soon after) held this oral universal tradition fabulously.

BESIDES, there were men among these nations that were worshippers of God, *Melchizedeck* (D) was of this number. And these were

(D) *Melchizedeck*, king of *Salem*. *St. Paul* in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, Ch. vii. 3. says, that he was "without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." By which we are

were afterwards called, by the jews, profelytes of the gate. They were persons who worshipped God in the same manner as the patriarchs did before, and after, the flood. They did not submit to circumcision, and the rites of *Moses*. Vast numbers of these profelytes of the gate, lived in *Moses's* time. These preserved a pure oral tradition concerning these events for some time; but their posterity lapsing into idolatry, added fabulous stories thereto. Yet notwithstanding, a corrupt, universal tradition concerning these events, seems to be handed down by the heathens from one to another, to the coming of Christ. Which is apparent, in that neither Christ nor his apostles question their belief of these facts.

I JUDGE, these marks of credibility are sufficient to satisfy a modest reader, that the history *Moses* has given us, is a true, and an authentic

are only to understand, that the scriptures of the *Old Testament*, had given no account of his pedigree, nor of his death. It is certain, he descended in a natural way. This king and his subjects maintained a faithful tradition of the creation and deluge. He is stiled, the priest of the MOST HIGH GOD, *Gen. xiv. 9.*

PART authentic narration, and as such to be relied on.

I.

AND as to the event of the deluge, we ourselves are capable, even at this day, of judging of the truth and reality of it. We have an evident sign and token of the flood. This sign is the RAINBOW. Which bow never appeared before the deluge; but has ever since, in all ages, been seen by all men: and has been accounted by all as an existing evidence of the truth of this event. It is recorded, *Gen. ix. 13, 16.* "I do set my
"BOW in the cloud, and it shall be for
"A TOKEN, &c. And the BOW shall
"be IN THE CLOUD."

SECT. III.

OF the mosaic law.

MOSES gave unto the *Israelites* certain laws, which the reader will find in the twentieth and following chapters of *Exodus*, the books of *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*, which he may easily turn unto: I need not rehearse them. *Josephus* relates the matter in some different

different words in his fourth book of the CHAP.

Antiquities of the Jews. These laws the jews
are said to observe at this day. At least, if

I.

they do not observe all of them, they allow
the validity of them, and that *Moses* was the
author of them. The heathens looked upon
the hebrews as governed by their own laws,
and used often to reproach them with it.

Josephus * in his *Jewish History* relates *Ba-*
laam's counsel to the *Madianites*, in order to
gain a victory over the *Hebrews*. It was,

“ That the *Madianites* should send their

“ fairest virgins down to the camp of the

“ *Israelites*. These virgins, upon the *He-*

“ *brews* lusting for them, reproach them

“ with their laws of separation, of meats

“ clean and unclean; and tell them, they

“ ought to seek out a new world to live in,

“ being, by reason of their laws, not fit for

“ the society of men: and, that they be-

“ ing few, in respect of the rest of man-

“ kind, ought to sacrifice to their gods,

“ and observe their customs. They likewise

“ urged, when the *Hebrews* would have de-

“ bauched them, that if they did not swear

“ unto

“

“

“

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* Antiq. l. 4. c. 9.

PART “unto them, not to put them away after

I.

“intercourse, and that they would sacrifice
 “to their gods, both which were contrary,
 “they said, to their policy of religion, they
 “would not stay with them.” The *He-*
brews complied.

MOREOVER, there has been a general
 and constant assent and consent of all per-
 sons in all the ages of the jewish common-
 wealth, to the truth of these facts. And those
 persons certainly, who lived nearest the time
 of *Moses*, were the best judges, whether the
 writings and laws bearing his name, were
 his or not. Can it be thought, that any
 impostor could after his death impose upon
 a people so knowing and head-strong as the
Jews were? or, can we find in the writings
 of the *Old Testament*, or other jewish writ-
 ings, a single instance of one jew, who ever
 questioned, whether the law, and history of
Moses were his or not? It cannot therefore
 be a thing incredible, that *Moses* should
 write the record of the creation, deluge, and
 his own laws. It follows, from another
 consideration, that our *Moses*, was the au-
 thor of these records, and he who delivered
 them

them from bondage in *Egypt*, because we find the *Israelites* in all ages, constantly believing it, and ready to sacrifice their lives, than admit the minuteſt alteration to be made in their law.

CHAP.
I.

AND had the law been an impoſture impoſed upon the jews by deſigning men after *Mofes's* time, under his name, we ſhould certainly have found the remains of cavils and diſputes againſt ſuch an innovation. They would not quietly have ſubmitted to ſuch a pretence, and have given up their rites and cuſtoms, which were ſettled according to other forms of government, had not *Mofes* been the very giver of theſe laws.

To this we may add: that heathen antiquity, did always acknowledge *Mofes* for the lawgiver of the jews. Profane writers have ſpoke of the laws and hiſtory of *Mofes*, as really his. The writings bearing his name, are generally called the *Pentateuch*. The jews preſerved theſe books as containing their laws. When the houſes of *Israel* and *Judab* became ſeparate kingdoms, they

F

both

PART both of them respected these records, and
 I. after the babylonian captivity, the jews re-
 vised and corrected them. It is as certain,
 that these books have *Moses* for their author,
 as that the epistles bearing *Paul's*, *Ignatius's*,
 or *Polycarp's* name, are their very writings.
 If it could be supposed, that there have been
 some additions and alterations made in them,
 yet the bulk of the history, and of the law
 must be the same. It appears to be the most
 ancient record, giving us a plain and histo-
 rical account of the beginning and creation
 of the world, and to have nothing fabulous
 in it throughout the whole narration. And
Moses was the most proper man of any in
 the world for this work. He received what
 he wrote from persons, who had conversed
 with the patriarchs after the flood. These
 men received the tradition of the creation
 from *Noah*, who lived six hundred years
 before the flood, and *Noah* had it from
Methuselah, who lived two hundred forty
 three years before the death of *Adam*, and
 received the tradition from *Adam* himself.

THERE might be added many other in-
 stances, to prove the credibility of *Moses's*
 writings ;

writings; but my design being to be as CHAP.
short as possible, I hope the reader will, I.
from what has been said, see cause to look
upon the proofs alleged, as in themselves
sufficient to corroborate the high esteem he
has always had of the records bearing his
name. And if it should happen, that he
should be in dispute with any libertine who
shall deny the validity of these writings, he
may be ready to attest the truth of them,
both as they are corroboratives of the facts
related by *Moses*, and as sufficient testimo-
nies of themselves, of the truth of the several
facts related by them.

SECT. IV.

OF the writings of the prophets.

THUS have I done with *Moses's* history.
The next in course is the book of *Joshua*.
This book continues the history of the jews
during the life of its author. In the *Penta-*
teuch, *Moses* mentions this man, *Joshua*, as
his successor. After his death, the people
say to *Joshua*, “ According as we hearken- Josh. i. 17,
“ ed unto *Moses* in all things, so will we
F 2 “ hearken

PART “hearken unto thee, only the Lord thy

I.

“God be with thee, as he was with *Moses*.”

So that the facts related in this book, as *Josbua* was an historian, and as he was a leader of the people, and highly favoured of God, may be looked on as a good narration.

THEN follows the history of their judges, the story of *Ruth*, and the history of their kings, and the books of chronicles. Which as they have been received by jews and christians, leave no room for questioning their validity: but is, on the other hand, a magnificent testimony in favour of them.

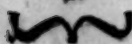
THE book of *Psalms*, and writings of the prophets, we have as much, and more reason to believe, are the works of the several authors, whose names they bear, as that the *Theogonia* is *Hesiod*'s, and that the writings bearing *Lucan*'s, *Anaxagoras*'s, *Plato*'s, *Cicero*'s, or any other valid author's name, are their very writings.

THE agreeability of the doctrinal part of these writings of the prophets, with the law
and

and history of *Moses*, is one instance that they are credible. Again, after the babylonish captivity, *Ezra*, *Nebemiab*, and several others, who made up the great synagogue, collected these books of the *Old Testament* into one volume, and so left them a canon or rule to the jewish people.

CHAP.
I.





C H A P. II.

The STATE of the JEWS and
HEATHENS.

- I. *THE idolatries and sins of the Israelites.*
 II. *Of the Heathens.*

FROM what has been offered, in the foregoing chapter, it plainly appears, that the WRITINGS of the OLD TESTAMENT do contain a HISTORY credible and well-attested. We may, THEREFORE SAFELY, rely upon its authority : and from THENCE assure ourselves, that there certainly was a necessity for a REVELATION, in order to bring mankind to the knowledge of GOD. Which will be done, with great ease and perspicuity, by taking a short view of the history, these writings give us, of the state of the whole world, both jews and heathens.

thens. And as this book is in every man's hand, so will he have his proof of this necessity always by him.

CHAP.
II.
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THE history of the *Old Testament* being wrote by persons of the jewish nation, and now, and always, universally received by them and others for truth, is upon that account unexceptionable. The facts related concerning the jewish state are certainly true. The character they give of themselves is indisputable. And these, if any narrations, may safely be relied on.

SECT. I.

THE idolatries and sins of the Israelites.

MOSES tells us, that the children of *Israel*, when they were encamped in the desert of *Sinai*, he being absent, made themselves a molten calf. And it appears from *Exod. xx. 22.* which law *Moses* gave them, that they were commanded, “ not to make “ any graven (or carved) image, or the “ likeness of any thing in heaven above, or “ in

PART " in the earth, or in the waters under the

I. " earth." This likewise appears from several other foregoing places of this book, *Exod.* xii. 13, &c. But so soon did they transgress, that in the space of forty days, the absence of *Moses*, (so prone were they to idolatry) they gathered themselves together unto *Aaron*, and said unto him,

Ex. xxxii. " Up, make us gods that shall go before  
" us, for as for this *Moses*, the man that  
" brought us up out of the land of Egypt,  
" we wot not what is become of him."

*Aaron* complies with their request, or rather command, and bids them, " Break  
" off the golden ear-rings that are in the  
" ears of your wives, of your sons, and of  
" your daughters, and bring them unto  
" me." And then follows the peoples ready

Ver. 3. compliance with his proposal. " And  
" all the people brake off the golden  
" ear-rings which were in their ears,  
" and brought them unto *Aaron*." Of

Ver. 24. this gold he made a molten calf. " Then,  
" says he to *Moses*, I cast it into the fire,  
" and there came out this calf." The character

Ver. 8. they give this golden image, shows their superstition. And they said, " These

" be

“be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

CHAP.  
II.  


THIS is the first instance we have upon record, of the proneness of the children of *Abraham* to idolatry; though it may be surmised, that they were guilty of some idolatrous practises while they dwelt in *Egypt*: it not being possible to think, that a people could become so monstrously wicked in so short a space of time.

THAT this might be their unhappy case, we may conjecture from divers passages in this book of *Exodus*. Chap. i. 8. it is said, “Now there arose up a new king over *Egypt*, which knew not (E) *Joseph*.” The  
consc-

(E) *Joseph*, one of the twelve sons of *Jacob*, was sold by his brethren into *Egypt*, where he became ruler of the land of *Egypt* under *Pharaoh*, in the year of the world, 2289, *Gen.* xli. 40. *Jacob*, with his family, went into *Egypt*, at *Joseph*'s request, in A. M. 2298, *Ch.* xvi. 1. He dwelt in *Egypt* near seventeen years, and died A. M. 2315, *Ch.* xlix. 1. *Joseph*, being one hundred and ten years old, died A. M. 2369, fifty four years after his father *Jacob*, *Ch.* l. 26. In the year 2427, there arose a new king in *Egypt*, who  
knew



PART consequence of which was, that this king  
 I. oppressed and grieved the children of *Israel*.  
 In *Joseph's* time, they were allowed to sacrifice to God, the Lord of the universe, and to observe the rites of religion their fathers had enjoined them. But in length of time, it is very likely, the *Egyptians* made the *Israelites*, at least, forbear worshipping and sacrificing to God, if they did not oblige them to worship their own deities. For *Pharaoh* set over them task-masters, who greatly afflicted them, and made them serve with rigour, so that their lives were bitter with hard bondage. This bondage lasted eighty six years. During which time, the *Israelites* were not permitted to sacrifice unto the Lord.

knew not *Joseph*, i. e. was not personally acquainted with him; and did willfully overlook the services he had done the *Egyptians*, *Exod. i. 8*. This king began to oppress the *Israelites*, *ver. 9, 10, &c.* This was fifty eight years after the death of *Joseph*. They had been in *Egypt*, at this time, one hundred twenty nine years. *Moses* was born six years after this in A. M. 2433, *Ch. ii. 1*. At the age of eighty years, in A. M. 2513, he released the *Israelites* from their bondage: in which they had then been eighty six years. They sojourned in *Egypt*, from A. M. 2298 to A. M. 2513: in all two hundred and fifteen years.

Lord. For which they apprehend some hea-  
 vy judgment would fall on them, if they did  
 not depart out of *Egypt*, and sacrifice to  
 God. They say to *Pharaoh*, “ The God  
 “ of the hebrews hath met with us : let us  
 “ go, we pray thee, three days journey in-  
 “ to the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord  
 “ our God; lest he fall upon us with pe-  
 “ stilence, or with the sword.” This shews  
 that they had neglected the worship of the  
 true God. And this is a plain intimation  
 that they were not permitted in *Egypt* to  
 serve God: for he says, “ Let my people  
 “ go, that they may serve me.”

CHAP.

II.

Exod. v.

3.

— viii. 1.

THE first and second commandments  
 shew, that the *Israelites* had been, and some  
 of them were idolaters, which was the cause  
 of their institution, “ Thou shalt have no  
 “ other gods before me. Thou shalt not  
 “ make unto thee any graven image, &c.”  
 And having delivered the decalogue, he  
 proceeds to give them laws against every  
 particular vice, which were practised by the  
*Egyptians*. For thus it is expressed, “ After  
 “ the doings of the land of *Egypt*, wherein  
 “ ye dwelt, shall ye not do.”

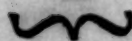
Deut. xviii

3.

MOSES,

## PART

## I.



*MOSES*, a short time before his death, gives them this character, “ You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.” The time of his knowledge may be reckoned, at least, forty or fifty years.

Dent. ix.  
24.

IdOLATRY, or the worship of images, dæmons, &c. was a crime that the children of *Israel* often practised. Thus, *Judges* ii. 11. they served *Baalim*. “ For, says the history, ver. 10. there arose a generation after the death of *Joshua*, that knew not the Lord.” These *Israelites* served *Baalim*, that is, instead of sacrificing to the Lord *JEHOVAH*, who created the heaven and the earth, and all things, they offered up sacrifices of their substance to this idol, and bowed themselves down before it, ver. 12. and so they did to divers other gods. Two of which are particularly mentioned, ver. 13. *Baal* and *Ashtaroth*. They are therefore said, to forsake the Lord God of their fathers, and God of themselves, who had made them. This forsaking, was, their offering up sacrifices and oblations to those senseless deities, instead of offering

offering them to the Creator of the world. The expression, *They forsook the Lord*, may imply, that the altars which they had erected to the Lord, were now disused, and others erected to the honour of these gods. Or, as it is intimated, *ver. 11.* they offered sacrifices on those very altars, whereon before they had offered sacrifices to the Lord, to the gods of the people that were round about them, *ver. 12.* And this may very properly be termed, doing evil in the sight of the Lord. It is very likely that they converted the altars of the Lord to such abominable practices; for it is said, *ch. iii. 5, 6, 7.*

“ And the children of Israel dwelt among  
“ the Canaanites, Hittites, &c. and they  
“ took their daughters to be their wives,  
“ and gave their daughters to their sons,  
“ and served their gods. And the children  
“ of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,  
“ (*probably upon his own altars*) and they  
“ forgot the Lord their God, (*who had the*  
“ *only right to these honours*) and served Baalim, and the groves.” The word *forgot*, signifies here only, that they forsook to pay that worship to the Lord, which is due to him. Not that they forgot in an absolute sense;



PART I. sense; for this no one can do. But they neglected, they refused to pay divine honours to him, to whom alone they are due. And their offering them up to other objects, may, in a limited sense, be said to forget the Lord their God.

AT the 12th verse of this chapter, it is recorded, that the children of *Israel* did evil again in the sight of the Lord, *i. e.* they returned to their worshipping and sacrificing to idols, which is an abomination unto the Lord.

DURING the days of *Ebud*, wherein he judged *Israel*, they observed the law of *Moses*, but when *Ebud* was dead, they did evil in the sight of the Lord, *ch. iv. 1.* and they returned and worshipped God, and in a short time fell again into idolatry, *ch. vi. 1.*

GIDEON worshipped the Lord his God, but even he made an ephod of the gold, which every man had taken from the enemies as his prey, and this he set up in the city *Opbrab*; and all the *Israelites* went a whoring after it, which thing became a  
snare

snare unto *Gideon*, and to his house, *ch. viii.* CHAP.  
27. II.

THIS action of *Gideon* was strictly forbid by the law of *Moses*, "Thou shalt not make thee a graven image, the likeness of any thing in heaven, or in earth, or in the waters under the earth. Neither shalt thou bow thyself down to it." The very creation of this statue was a crime, and an offence against this law. The ill use the *Israelites* made of it was still worse: For they went a whoring after it. It is likely, they went journies to see it, and apprehended that there was a peculiar sanctity in it; and that it was a continual blessing to their country; that by virtue of this ephod they enjoyed peace and tranquility: and, undoubtedly, they were not wanting in their contributions in making both that and the city sumptuous and magnificent. They were more desirous of seeing this ephod and the city *Opbrab*, than they were diligent in observing their law. And the more because every man's share of gold composed a part of it. The sumptuousness of this image is set down by the jewish historian in these words: "And <sup>Judges viii 26.</sup> the

PART “ the weight of the golden ear-rings that he  
 I. “ requested, was one thousand seven hun-  
 dred shekels of gold, beside ornaments,  
 “ and collars, or sweet jewels, and purple  
 “ raiment that was on the kings of Midian,  
 “ and besides the chains that were about  
 “ their camels necks.” Undoubtedly, the  
 jews were continually praising this image,  
 and admiring its excellence, magnificence,  
 beauty and proportion. They did likewise  
 boast of it, and challenge all the nations of  
 the earth to shew such a statue. And be-  
 cause every man had contributed towards it,  
 each man thought it in a manner his own,  
 and spake of it to his children as such. And  
 the children of these men often said unto  
 their fathers, When will the days come, that  
 we may go up to *Ophrab*, to see the golden  
 ephod whereof you so often spake unto us.

THE city wherein this ephod was placed,  
 was the residence of *Gideon*, and a city of  
 the greatest resort, at that day, among the  
 jews in *Canaan*. For this *Ophrab*, is called  
*Gideon's city*, *v. 27*. It was likewise the place  
 of his birth, for *Joash* his father lived there,  
 and he was buried in this city in the sepul-  
 chre

chre of *Joash* his father, *ver.* 32. This image was erected in the beginning of the government of *Gideon*, and is here recorded as his first public act, after he had gained the victory over the *Midianites*. It is certain, that it was erected in a short time after, and with all speed; for *Gideon* appears in his history an active and dispatchive man: a man of a quick wit, and great resolution. His intention in making this ephod (F) might be, to keep in memory the victory he had obtained over the *Midianites*, and to make every one the more sensible of it; (or to cause it to be retained) he required, that every man, who had spoils he had taken from the enemy, should give some part of it (at least) towards the expence, that so the monument might always be spoken of, as the spoils of *Midian*.

CHAP.  
II.

G

I

(F) The ephod was the upper garment, which the priest wore upon his shoulders. The appointment of it is recorded, *Exod.* xxviii. 4. "And these are the garments which they shall make; a breast-plate, and an EPHOD, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle." Thus habited was the priest to go in before the Lord, *v.* 13, 29.



## PART

## I.

I JUDGE this to be the primary intention of *Gideon*, in his erection of this golden ephod. But tho' this might be the truth, yet we are assured, that it became a snare to *Gideon* and his house, *ver.* 27. So, that though his design at first might have some small appearance of rectitude in it; yet in a short time he himself, and his family, paid such a respect to it, which the writer of this history could not justify: and speaking modestly of it, stiles his crime, a snare.

*GIDEON* was a valiant man, and he subdued *Midian*, and the country was in quietness forty years in the days of *Gideon*, *ver.* 28. It is very likely, that almost all this time, the children of *Israel* went a whoring after this ephod, travelling from all parts to the city *Opbrab* to see the golden image, which *Gideon* their judge and governour had set up. As the historian represents it, at *ver.* 27,

WHETHER *Gideon* indulged his subjects in paying respects to this ephod, to keep them from worshipping the gods of the heathen,

then, cannot certainly be determined: but CHAP.  
 yet, methinks, this thought must not en- II.  
 tirely be rejected: because the word *snare*  
 may signify as much, That *Gideon* in a  
 state-politic to preserve the jews his bre-  
 thren from lapsing into downright idolatry,  
 to which they were always prone, did in-  
 dulge them in reverencing this golden ephod,  
 which he had placed in the city of his resi-  
 dence. Moreover, he might be delighted  
 in thinking, that this monument would con-  
 tinue the memory of him, and his brave  
 action, always fresh in the minds of the  
 people. He took, perhaps, a secret de-  
 light in seeing the numbers that resorted  
 continually to pay their respects to the  
 image, and as great a delight in hearing the  
 people eccho forth the praises of the valiant  
 atchiever. He might find likewise, that  
 his people was so taken with this bawble,  
 (which, in a great measure, resembled a god  
 of an heathen nation) that they had little  
 or no inclination to favour the superstitions  
 of the heathens.

HOWEVER, it is very certain, that if  
*Gideon* was not, in any respect, an abettor

PART of the worship, which the *Israelites* paid this

I. golden image : yet, it was in his power to have hindered this, by punishing his people for their superstition : and when he saw the ill use that was made of it, to have taken it down, and destroyed it, that so the people might not come a whoring after it, and pay that respect to it, which was not its due. This he ought to have done. And, as he did not do it, he may justly be said to indulge, and wink at, his people in this their abominable practice. Had he discountenanced it, and removed this image, the historian would certainly have taken notice of it. And, I doubt not, the 27th verse would have read thus : “ And Gideon “ made an ephod thereof, and put it in his “ city, even in Ophrah ; and all Israel “ went thither a whoring after it : And “ when Gideon saw it, he repented : and “ he took down the ephod, which he had “ set up, and destroyed it.” This, the writer of this story would have done, if it had been the truth.

THE manner in which the jews paid their reverences to this ephod, is not material.

It

It would be somewhat more satisfactory, if CHAP.  
 it had been related. A parallel case will II.  
 certainly determine it in some degree. The  
 jews are here said, to go a whoring: and  
 before, *Cb. ii. 12.* they are said, to follow  
 after other gods: so that the words are syno-  
 nymous. And it may be supposed, that  
 they went pilgrimages to it, and that they  
 offered money to its honour for its support.  
 At the best, it shews the temper of this  
 people, that they were willing to worship  
 any carved image, rather than observe the  
 rites and ceremonies of the mosaic law;  
 that they were addicted to worship stocks  
 and stones, and the works of their own  
 hands.

So prone were they to this sort of wor-  
 ship, that as soon as *Gideon* was intombed  
 in his father's sepulchre, they fell again into  
 gross idolatry, and went a whoring now af-  
 ter *Baalim*, as they had, in the days of *Gi-  
 deon*, gone a whoring after the golden ephod,  
 which he set up in *Opbrab* of the *Abiezrites*.  
 And because one god would not satisfy their  
 idolatrous fancy, they added another to  
 him: whose name was *Baal-berith*. " And



PART " now, *says the writer of this story,* the  
 I. " children of Israel remembred not the  
 " Lord their God : " that is, they did not  
 offer up sacrifices and burnt-offerings unto  
 God, nor observe the rites and ceremonies,  
 which *Moses* had enjoined them.

THIS they did, in a cold and slovenly manner in the days of *Gideon*. Although they did go a whoring after the golden ephod, yet they did not totally neglect to offer sacrifices to heaven, as their prophet had appointed. If they had wholly and generally neglected this, our historian would have given us some hint, by saying as he does in this place, that they remembred not the Lord their God. So that in the days of *Gideon*, though the people were generally, to an idolatrous degree, fond of the image at *Opbrab*; yet the worship of God was not wholly laid by, and disregarded. The public reading of the law, and the observation of the rites and ceremonies thereof, were not publicly abolished. There remained a shew of religion, though in reality there was but little: yet it cannot be said, that they did not remember the Lord. The priests daily performed

formed their services, according to their courses, and the festivals appointed by *Moses* were observed. Their sabbaths were kept holy.

CHAP.  
II.  
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BUT when *Gideon's* head was laid, they neglected all this, and converted the very altars of the Lord into altars of their new gods. In this sense, therefore, their case, after their governour's death, was worse than before. Though the transition was natural, from the image of an ephod, to that of a man. The foundation of this crime was in *Gideon*, and he remains stigmatized for it in history, with great justice, to this day.

WHAT became of this golden ephod, after the death of *Gideon*, we are not told, but, as no changes happen in religion without tumult and rapine: we may conclude, that it was demolished, either by the jews themselves, or by the heathens. It is almost as likely the one, as the other.

WE may farther learn from this history, that the house of *Gideon* and the jews were at variance. The occasion of it, it is very likely,

PART likely, was this: the *Israelites*, after *Gideon's* death, insisted, that they were, un-

I.



der *Gideon's* judicial government, allowed to worship this golden ephod, (perhaps, as has been hinted, for certain politic reasons) and urged, if he could allow the worship of an ephod, or garment, certainly the worship of a man was much more eligible. And hereupon, we may suppose, they were for breaking the ephod, and with the gold thereof make a statue of *Baal-berith* their new god; and erect it in its stead. The *Gideonites* opposed this, and was for maintaining the honour of the golden image their father had set up; and pleaded, that it was far better to reverence and worship

Ex. xxviii. the ephod, which was appointed by God,  
5. than to worship the image of one of the deities of the nations, which was the mere invention of man. The people in general opposed the *Gideonites*, thinking it better to worship a man-god, than a garment deified. Thus they became enemies to the sons of *Gideon*, and followed, or whored after other gods; and, it may be, in the place of this ephod they erected the statue of a god, for it is said, they MADE *Baal-berith* their god.

THIS

THIS enmity of the people to the Gideonites is set down, *ver. 35.* “Neither  
“ shewed they kindness to the house of Je-  
“ rubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to  
“ all the goodness which he shewed unto  
“ Israel.” They refused to be governed  
by them.

WHETHER this be the occasion of their  
difference, which I have hinted; I leave the  
reader to judge, putting him in mind, that  
this golden ephod is said to have been a snare  
to Gideon, and to his house, *ver. 27.*

THE number of Gideon's sons were  
threescore and ten, for he had many wives,  
*ver. 31.* And besides these wives, he had  
also a concubine in *Shechem.* This woman  
had a son by him, and he called his name,  
*Abimelech*, *ver. 31.*

THIS *Abimelech* was an ambitious man,  
and a native of a populous city. He sided  
with the people in their inclinations to idola-  
try, (though perhaps some time before he  
had opposed it.) He took threescore and ten  
pieces



PART pieces of silver out of the temple of *Baal-berith*. This *Abimelech* cunningly blew up the *Shechemites* to make him king, persuading them, that it would be better for them to have but one ruler, than threescore and ten. This artifice, by the help of his mother and her children, and the house of his mother's father; a numerous family, and very honourable, and of great interest in their city, prevailed upon the men of *Shechem* to make *Abimelech* king. The *Shechemites* liked the proposal, because he was the son of *Gideon*, and one of their city; and gave him all suitable encouragement.

HE then contrives the murder of his brethren. To execute this his bloody design, he hires with the money that the *Shechemites* gave him, certain vain and thievish persons in all parts of *Shechem*. With these he travelled to *Opbrah*, and there slew his brethren, threescore and ten persons: save *Jotham* the youngest, who escaped the massacre.

IF then, any dispute did happen between the *Gideonites*, and the people, about the golden ephod, and these were the consequences of

of it; it is very plain, that this image at *Opbrab* proved a snare to the house of *Jerubbaal*. CHAP. II.

THE variance between the true sons of *Gideon* and the people, certainly gave *Abimelech* this opportunity of making himself king, and prompted him to commit the massacre recorded to be done by him.

HOWEVER this is certain, the *Israelites* after the decease of *Gideon* fell into downright idolatry. And, it is very likely, they continued in the practice of it during the reign of *Abimelech*.

IT should seem, that during the judicial government of *Tola* and *Jair*, the two succeeding judges in *Israel*, the people were not in idolatry, though perhaps they were too much inclined that way. If they were not guilty of neglecting the worship of the true God, according to the law, rites and ceremonies instituted by *Moses*, nor any ways given to idol-worship, during this period, then here is an interval of forty five years. "For *Tola* judged *Israel* twenty three  
" years,

PART “ years, and Jair twenty two years.” And  
 I. the sacred historian makes no mention of  
 any one lapse the children of *Israel* made during this time. We may be assured, that the *Israelites* during their judicial government did not forsake the worship of the mosaic law, and fall utterly into pagan superstition.

Ver. 5.  
 Ver. 6.

BUT no sooner is *Jair*, the last of these two dead, and buried in *Chamon*, but we are told in the very next verse, that “ the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him.” This their immediate lapse into such gross idolatry, as is here described, could not have happened, I think, if the *Israelites* had not been very much inclined to paganism, long before the death of *Jair*. Undoubtedly, there were many hebrews, who were in their hearts, pagans. And the generality were ready at the first opportunity, that offered,  
 of

of declaring for the idolatrous scheme. They only waited the favourable crisis to put their designs in execution. This they thought offered itself upon the death of *Jair*. However, at this time, all the people seem to have rejected, or interrupted, the judicial government of themselves, though instituted by their prophet *Moses*, and to divide themselves into several sects and parties. Some were for *Baalim*, others for *Ashtaroth*. Some for the gods of *Syria*, others for those of *Zidon* and *Moab*. Some for the gods of *Mammon*, others for those of the *Philistines*: but all agreed in this, they forsook their own religion, paid no worship to their creator, but abolished the rites of the mosaic institution; and upon the very altars were heretofore they used to offer up sacrifices and burnt-offerings unto the Lord, there they now offered up oblations to the gods of wood and stone.

WE are again told, *ch. xiii. 1.* that they fell again into idolatry, and that they were under the government of the *Philistines* forty years. And so prone was this people to idolatry, even in *Samuel's* time, that we find <sup>1 Sam. vii.</sup> him



PART I. him commanding, that they should put away the strange gods, and *Astaroth* from among them.

SOLOMON, who built a temple (c) to the honour of his Creator, afterwards fell into abominable idolatry. He went after *Astareth*, the goddess of the *Zidonians*, and after *Milcom*, the abomination of the *Ammonites*. He erected an altar in the high-place for the god *Chemosh*, the abomination of *Moab*, on a hill before the city of *Jerusalem*: and another he built for *Molech*, the god of the children of *Ammon*. He, moreover, erected altars for his wives, and these

(c) *Solomon* succeeded his father *David*, (in whose days the children of *Israel* constantly worshipped the Lord) in the throne of *Israel*, A. M. 2290. 1 *Kings* ii. 12. In the third year of his reign, he raised thirty thousand men, and prepared materials for building the temple, *cb.* v. 13, 14, &c. The same year (being the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of *Israel* were come out of *Egypt*) he laid the foundation of the temple, *cb.* vi. 1: and finished the building in seven years and an half, *ver.* 9. He was a great man, and all the world, it is said, sought unto him for wisdom, *cb.* x. 23, 24. And then the writer of this history,

these strange women burnt incense, and sa-  
crificed unto their gods.

CHAP.

II.

THIS wickedness of *Solomon* doth not seem to have extirpated the temple-worship, but only to have obscured it: for it is said, “ And *Solomon* went not fully after the Lord, as did *David* his father.” <sup>1 Kings xi. 6.</sup>

From whence we may conclude, that *Solomon* sometimes sacrificed unto God, and sometimes unto the pagan deities, not entirely neglecting the duty of the law, tho’ not fully observing it. Pagan worship was not set up in the temple, nor was there, by his order, sacrifices and incense offered to an heathen god upon the sacred altars. The priests were not obstructed in their office according to

story, having given an account of his grandeur, adds this exception: “ But king *Solomon* loved many “ strange women (together with [or besides] the “ daughter of Pharaoh) women of the Moabites, Am- “ monites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites.” *Ch.* xi. 2. And this lasciviousness of *Solomon*, was the occasion of his idolatry, *v.* 3, 4, &c. In which state he remained several years. He is said to have repented before his death, and to have wrote the book he called, *The Preacher*, as a testimony of it. He died, A. M. 3029, or 3030. He reigned forty years, *ver.* 42.

PART to their courses. No man was obliged to be  
 I. idolatrous, though it was fashionable to be  
 so, because *Solomon* and his court were so. By *Solomon's* being said to have done evil in the sight of the Lord, respects then not the total lapse of him, nor his people, into downright idolatry; but an indifferency, for the worship of God, and a great inclination to, as well as partial practice of this crime. He is not said to have forsook, or to have forgot God, but only not to have fully went after the Lord. Had it been said, that he had forgot God, we might have been assured, that the mosaic religion was not, in the least, observed by him; that the temple was kept shut, and the daily sacrifices not offered by the priests.

THE idolatry of *Solomon* lieth thus: when he went to the temple he observed the law; and when he went with his wives to an heathen god, he observed their superstitious rites. He did not command his people to neglect the ordinances of the law; but left every man at liberty either to observe them, or pagan rites. Whereas it was his duty, not only to command the observation of the law;

law; but also to see that his people paid a due deference thereto. After he had walked in this path some time, we are told, that his mind was turned from the Lord God of *Israel*, i. e. in length of time *Solomon* entirely left off worshipping at the temple, or after the jewish way, and gave himself up to observe the rites of *Astoret* the goddess of the *Zidonians*, *Milcom* and *Molech* of the *Ammonites*, and the god *Chemosh* of *Moab*.

CHAP.  
II.

THIS example in so great a prince and the wisest of men must, of consequence, make a vast number of idolatrous jews in all parts of *Palestine*, and especially in *Jerusalem*. When princes are either idolatrous, or immoral, the court and people are too much influenced thereby. A vicious king makes vicious courtiers, nobility and gentry, and by his example he corrupts the morals of the generality of his subjects. The *Israelites* were led by his example to judge idolatry not so great a crime, as they had thought; especially, when they reflected, that he was a man of an uncommon wisdom, wit, judgment, and penetra-

H

tion,



PART I. tion. If these things be considered, it may be affirmed, that the bulk of the people were inclined to idolatry: and it does appear afterwards, that many of them did forsake the observance of the jewish law, and entirely gave themselves up to do after the customs of the heathens to their gods.

THE latter end of the following chapter gives an account of the revolt of ten tribes, and their defection from the worship of the true God, to that of two golden calves. The story runs thus:

SOLOMON dies: *Reboboam* and *Jeroboam* contend for the crown. In the unhappy quarrel ten tribes revolt to *Jeroboam*. *Reboboam* with the remaining two tribes dwelt in *Jerusalem*, the seat of king *Solomon*. *Jeroboam* upon his being made king of ten tribes, builds him a city in mount *Ephraim*, called *Shechem*, and here he kept his palace. After this he built *Peniel*.

JEEROBOAM to prevent the future return of these ten tribes to the house and sovereignty of *David*, and to secure his own life,

life, makes him two calves of gold, and erects them the one in *Bethel*, and the other in *Dan*. When he had done this : he told his people, that it was too much for them to go up to worship God at *Jerusalem*, and said unto them, “ Behold thy gods, O “ Israel, which brought thee out of the “ land of Egypt.” Perhaps, he published an edict, forbidding the people to resort to *Jerusalem*, under certain penalties: for it does not appear, that *Jeroboam* abolished the observation of the jewish law, but did all he could to discourage it. He made two calves of gold, built an house of high places, appointed a feast to the honour of his gods, and sacrificed and burnt incense unto them. The people followed his example, and worshipped the gods he had set up. But, there were many who were not guilty of this crime under his government. We read of a family in *Bethel*, *ch. xiii. 11.* and of some others ; and, it may safely be conjectured, there were a great many more than are expressly mentioned.

THE house of *Judab*, over whom *Reboam* reigned in *Jerusalem*, “ They also (*says 1 Kings*  
H 2 “ *the xiv. 22, 23.*

PART “*the history*”) did evil in the sight of the

I.

“ Lord, and built high places, and erected  
 “ images, and made groves on every hill,  
 “ and under every green tree.” And they  
 worshipped these images according to the  
 customs of the nations. *Jeroboam's* crime  
 was a political stratagem. This a volun-  
 tary defection. The sacred history charges  
 the men of *Judah* with another abomina-  
 tion, besides that of idolatry. “ And there  
 “ were also sodomites in the land.” *Re-*  
*boboam* and *Jeroboam* were continually in  
 war. *Reboboam* contended for the govern-  
 ment of both houses : *Jeroboam* wanted to  
 be king in *Jerusalem*. This was their con-  
 test, for about seventeen years, which were  
 the days of the reign of *Reboboam*.

AFTER *Reboboam's* death, *Jeroboam* lived  
 about three years, and *Abijam* succeeding  
*Reboboam* in his government of the house of  
*Judah* in *Jerusalem*, during the life of *Jer-*  
*oboam*, *Abijam* and he were always in war.  
*Abijam* was a very wicked prince, and he  
 walked in all the sins of his father, counte-  
 nancing and encouraging his subjects in ido-  
 latry, and unnatural crimes. But *Asa* his  
 son

son having obtained the government of his father, he purged the sodomites out of the land, and destroyed all the idols; but he removed not the high places. He reigned forty and one years in *Jerusalem*. And it may be presumed, that the people were generally observant of the laws of *Moses*, though it may be suspected, that several worshipped in and respected the high places, which this king did not remove during his government. Our historian makes this a just exception to this great man's character: "But the high places were not removed."

WHEN *Asha* was in the second year of his reign over *Judah* in the holy city, *Nadab* the son of *Jeroboam*, reigned over *Israel*. He reigned two years; and trod in his father's steps, worshipped his calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and sacrificed to the gods of the nations. He was slain by *Baasha* in the second year of his reign. *Baasha* then took the government on himself, and he walked in the idolatries of his fathers all the days of his life. *Elah*, son of *Baasha* and king of *Israel*, followed the example of his



PART father. *Omri*, an impious prince. *Abab*,  
 I. son of *Omri*, successor of his father, married *Jezebeel*, daughter of *Ethbaal*, king of the *Zidonians*. After which marriage, he reared an altar to *Baal*, and worshipped him, in the house of *Baal*, which he built in *Samaria*: he built a grove, and was guilty of grosser sins than any of his predecessors. *Abaziah* followed the evil practices of the princes of the house of *Israel*. *Jeberam* bears much the same character.

2 Kings  
 xxii. 50.

*JEHOSHAPHAT* succeeded *Asa* in the kingdom of *Judab* at *Jerusalem*, and is said to have worked righteousness. *Jeberam*, son and successor of *Jehoshaphat*, reigned eight years in *Jerusalem*, and was an idolater. *Athaliah* a wicked woman, succeeded *Jeberam*, and was slain. *Amaziah* began his reign well, but afterwards sought strange gods, 2 *Chron.* xxv. 15. *Uzziah* bears much the same character, *ch.* xxvi. *Jotham*, a good king, succeeded by *Abaz*, a vile man: he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen. Besides idolatry, he was guilty of sacrilege; for he spoiled the temple,

2 Kings

2 *Kings* xvi. 17, 18. *Hoshea*, son of *Elab* CHAP.  
and king of *Israel*, was an idolater. II.

IN the third year of this king's reign, *Hezekiah* reigned in *Judah*. He abolished idolatry. He is said to have broke in pieces the brazen serpent (H) that *Moses* had made: to which the children of *Israel* were accustomed to burn incense. So that it should appear from this story, that the children of *Israel* had no intervals of idolatry: for, if they did not worship calves, ephod, or the gods of the nations: yet they paid divine honours to

H 4

*Moses's*

(H) The institution of this brazen serpent was by *Moses*. The occasion of it was this: the *Israelites* were come up out of *Egypt*, and journeying in the wilderness were plagued with fiery serpents that bit them, so that many of the people died, *Numb.* xxi. 6. to stay the plague, and to cure the people of their wounds, the order, erection and benefit of this brazen serpent runs thus: "And the Lord said unto *Moses*, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And *Moses* made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he

"lived."

PART I. *Moses's* brazen serpent, which certainly was an abomination: "For unto those days  
 " the children of Israel did burn incense to  
 " it." *Cb. xviii. 4.*

*MANASSEH* king of *Judab*, son and successor of *Hezekiab*, built up the high-places his father had destroyed, reared altars for *Baal*, made a grove, and worshipped the host of heaven. He polluted the temple, and built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. He abolished the true temple-worship, and made his son pass through the fire ;

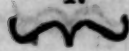
" lived." *ver. 8, 9.* The future consequences of which was, that the people took a sacred care of it, and worshipped it, by burning of incense unto it. It was erected in A. M. 2552. by *Moses*, who died the following year. The superstitious worship of this serpent, may be supposed to begin soon after his death, and to have continued during the government of *Josbua*, and might be an inlet to that abominable lapse to idolatry the *Israelites* fell into after *Josbua's* death. I suppose, therefore, it began to be used superstitiously in the first year of the judicial government of *Josbua*, in A. M. 2553, and continued so to be used till the days of good king *Hezekiab*, who destroyed it, in A. M. 3278: The space of time was, seven hundred twenty five years.

fire; he observed times, used enchantments, dealt with familiar spirits and wizards; and erected a graven image in the temple. Besides, he put many that were innocent to death. In short, he was a most impious man. *Amon* his son continued the abominations of his father during his reign: which seems to have been but two years. *Manasseh* reigned fifty five years: the abuse of the temple was fifty seven years to the death of *Amon*. *Josiah* his successor observed the mosaic law, and repaired the temple. He was succeeded by *Jeboabaz*, an idolatrous prince. All his successors in the house of *Judab*, were wicked and idolatrous princes.

IN the reign of *Jeboiakim*, *Nebuchadnezzar* laid siege to *Jerusalem*, and reduced the kingdom of *Judab* to the state of a dependent prince: *Jeboiakim* became his servant three years: but willing to shake of the *Assyrian* yoke, he rebelled against *Nebuchadnezzar*. This brought upon him captivity, he was taken by *Nebuchadnezzar*, bound in fetters of gold, and carried to *Babylon*. *Jeboiachin*, son of *Jeboiakim*, *Nebuchadnezzar* appointed to reign in his stead.

2 Kings  
xxiv. 1.



PART I. stead. He, as well as his father, did that

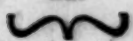
I. which was evil in the sight of the Lord. He reigned but three months. *Nebuchadnezzar* appointed *Zedekiah* to be his successor, and made him take an oath of allegiance and subjection to him. Which state of dependance *Zedekiah* grew very uneasy under, and, contrary to his oath, rebelled against *Nebuchadnezzar*. Who, enraged hereat, resolves to extirpate the jewish kingdom. In the ninth year of the reign of *Zedekiah* in *Jerusalem*, *Nebuchadnezzar* laid siege to the city. *Zedekiah* made a stout opposition, and stood the *Affyrian* fury eighteen months: in the eleventh year of his reign, *Nebuchadnezzar* took the city, destroyed it, plundered the temple (1) and burnt it, and carried the principal of those, who escaped his fury, captives to *Babylon*. Which state of servitude lasted till the time of *Cyrus*. This, we are assured, was brought on the children

(1) The temple had been built and finished, at this time, four hundred sixteen years, from A. M. 3001, the year wherein *Solomon* dedicated it, till A. M. 3416. The vessels and ornaments of the temple *Nebuchadnezzar* destroyed and carried away to *Babylon*, we read of, 1 *Kings* vi. vii. and 2 *Kings* xxv. 13, 14, &c.

children of *Israel*, by their wicked, abominable and idolatrous practices.

CHAP.

II.



WHEN *Cyrus* the *Persian* came to his government, he published a decree, licencing <sup>2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23.</sup> all the *Israelites*, which were captives in *Babylon*, to go up to *Jerusalem*, and rebuild the temple. This generous prince delivered to them all the treasures and ornaments which *Nebuchadnezzar* had plundered the temple of, and commanded that all people should encourage the work.

DURING their captivity in *Babylon* it is plain they were idolatrous. When this decree was published, and they were got into *Jerusalem*, we find *Ezra* endeavoured to reform the people. He says, “ The people of *Israel*, and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves [not kept themselves separate during the captivity] from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the *Canaanites*, the *Hittites*, the *Perizzites*, the *Jebusites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Moabites*, the *Egyptians*, and the *Amorites*. For they have taken of their daughters

PART “daughters for themselves, and for their

I. “sons, so that the holy seed have mingled  
 “themselves with the people of those lands:

“yea, the hands of the princes and rulers

“hath been chief in this trespass.” Such

conjunctions were always too much in favour  
 of idolatry. And now *Ezra* when he had

brought the people into their own city, was  
 for obliging them to observe the law of *Mo-*

*ses*. Being under his command, they plain-

*Ezra* x. 12. ly tell him, “As thou hast said, so must

“we do.” And from this time to the

coming of Christ we read no more of a

total lapse to idolatry. And they seem at

our Saviour’s time to be free from it.

*EZEKIEL*, ch. xxii. 3, 4, &c. charges  
 his countrymen with divers sins: he calls *Je-*  
*rusalem* a bloody city, a city that maketh  
 idols, whose princes love to shed blood:  
 a people who despised father and mother:  
 oppressors of the stranger: despisers of ho-  
 ly things: profaners of sabbaths: carriers of  
 tales, or contrivers, to shed blood: commit-  
 ters of lewdness: discoverers of their fathers  
 nakedness: committers of abominations  
 with their neighbours wives, &c. receivers  
 of

of gifts to shed blood : extortioners, and to compleat their character he sums the whole up in these words: " And hast forgotten me, " saith the Lord." *Hosea*, also, *ch.* iv. 2. charges them with swearing, lying, stealing and killing, and committing adultery, and of shedding blood.

CHAP.

II.

*MALACHI*, the last of the prophets, (who flourished within four hundred years of Christ,) complains of their indifferency in observing the law of *Moses*, in these words: " Even from the days of your fathers ye " have gone away from mine ordinances, " and have not kept them: return unto me, " and I will return unto you, saith the Lord " of hosts. Your words have been stout " against me, saith the Lord. Ye have " said, it is in vain to serve God ; and what " profit is it, that we have kept his ordinances. And now, *adds he*, we call the " proud happy : yea, they that work wickedness are set up ; yea, they that tempt " God are even delivered." *ch.* iii. 7, 13, 14, 15. This is the character *Malachi* gives of them.

ABOUT



## PART

## I.

ABOUT an hundred and eighty years before the advent of Christ, we find this account of some jews. 1 *Mac.* i. 11, 14, 15.  
 “ In those days went there out of Israel,  
 “ wicked men, who persuaded many, saying,  
 “ ing, let us go, and make a covenant with  
 “ the heathen, that are round about us;  
 “ for since we have departed from them,  
 “ we have had much sorrow. Whereupon  
 “ they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem,  
 “ according to the customs of the heathens,  
 “ and made themselves uncircumcised and forsook the holy covenant, and  
 “ joyned themselves to the heathen, and  
 “ were sold to do mischief.”

I now make two or three observations upon this short account of the state of the jews, from the time of *Moses*, till the coming of Christ.

1. IT is apparent, that the *Israelites* were, from *Moses*’s time to the building of the temple under *Cyrus*, more given to idolatry and vice, than to the observation of the law.

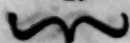
2. UPON

2. UPON the apostacy and death of *Solomon* ten tribes are lost in idolatry, and never restored to the observation of the jewish rites. They were indeed for some time governed by kings of their own, but in length of time they became servile to the heathens. Ten tribes being cut off, there remained in *Jerusalem* and its neighbouring cities but the tribe of *Judah*, and the tribe of *Benjamin*. Afterwards these became slaves in *Babylon* to *Nebuchadnezzar*. *Cyrus* decreed their return to *Jerusalem*.

3. THE case standing thus, at the time of our Lord's appearance in *Judea*, there remained a sixth of the jews, who had escaped the contagion of idolatry, which now had overspread the whole earth. And, in short, though they were not guilty of this crime, yet they were but pretended worshippers of God; they, indeed, came near unto him with their lips, but in their morals they were as corrupt as the rest of the world. So, though they did not fall down and pay adoration to images of wood and stone, yet they continually worshipped their own

PART own follies and vices. But of this more

I. hereafter.



IN reciting the many lapses of the *Israelites* to idolatry, I have already given a sufficient account of the state of the rest of the world. I might omit the following section, but for the sake of two or three observations, I add:

#### S E C T. II.

##### *Of the Heathens.*

BY heathens are meant all those who worshipped images of their own invention, or those things that were made by God, as the sun, the moon, man, &c. The name likewise distinguishes the rest of the world from the seed of *Abraham*.

VERY soon after the death of *Noah*, the whole world ran into idolatry. *Abraham* was the only person, besides *Melchizedek*, (as we particularly read of) who observed the law of the patriarchs. That this was the state of the world, at that time, is plain from

from the story of *Laban* and *Jacob*. *La-*CHAP.  
*ban* pursues *Jacob* and his family for his II.  
 gods, *Gen.* xxxi. 30.

AND we may perceive throughout the whole history of the *Old Testament*, that the seed of *Abraham* are the only people who worshipped the Creator of the world: notwithstanding which, it does not follow, that there were none, besides jews, who worshipped the true God: though their numbers were so small, that very little, or no notice was taken of them.

THE character which *Moses* gives of the nations, as it respects idolatry, is very plain in his writings. I shall mention a few particulars.

*MOLECH*, one of the *Egyptian* gods, is taken notice of *Lev.* xx. 2. This seems to be the same with *Moloch* of the *Ammonites*, to whom the people were used to give their children. This idol was in the fashion of a man, his head was like the head of a calf, and his arms stretched out. In his stomach were seven holes; in six of  
 I these



PART I. these holes they used to offer beasts and other oblations; in the seventh infants. These infants, some say, were actually burnt to death: others, that they only passed thro' two piles of wood set on fire. But which is the truth, I cannot say. It seems from *Moses*, that they gave their children to *Moloch*; for these are his words: "Because he hath given of his seed unto Moloch." From which words it should seem, that they were used to sacrifice their children to this idol. Well might *Moses* stile this an abomination. Nay, if the other be the truth, that they only passed through the fire to this image, as is elsewhere asserted, it was nevertheless a great abomination.

ON the departure of the children of *Israel* from among the *Egyptians*, we find that people very idolatrous: and *Moses* tells them, "that they should not make for themselves idols, nor rear up standing images, after their custom: but that they should be a people holy unto the Lord." The idols or deities of the *Egyptians*, before, and at the time of *Moses*, were very numerous. And undoubtedly, some worshipped this god,

god, or idol, and some that, and so on. The CHAP.  
rites of this idol *Moloch*, seem to be many, II.  
and one of them very inhuman. The offer-  
ing up of infants, or causing them to pass  
through the fire to him, is an action so  
base and sordid, and so inhuman, that one  
would judge nothing in nature could be  
guilty of such an enormity.

*BAALIM*, another god of the na-  
tions: he is mentioned in the *Old Testa-*  
*ment*, Judges ii. as a god of the people  
round about *Israel*, ver. 11. They had  
many gods in *Canaan*. This *Baalim* was  
a statue erected by the first heathens, and  
seems to have been the most antique god.  
Under this type they are said, at first, to  
have worshipped the true God. This sort  
of idolatry appearing to have had the same  
use in those early ages, as the crucifix, at  
this day, among the papists, I shall briefly  
shew its repugnancy to the dictates of rea-  
son.

THE patriarchs after the death of *Noah*,  
deserted the laws of their progenitors, till at  
length they became so besotted to their

PART vices, and to worldly cares; that they had  
I.

well nigh forgot that there was a Being, who was the Creator of the world, and of themselves: a few only excepted. These thought it proper to make an image, a type or symbol of God, that should put them in mind of him, and keep up a remembrance of him to future generations. This image they erected in their principal cities, after the same manner, in those early days, as we do, at this day, the statues of kings and great men. Temples were of later invention.


UNDER this notion, though contrary to the plainest dictates of reason, the heathen world, about the days of the patriarch *Abraham*, paid their worship to God. In this sense, the *Israelites* soon after the death of *Joshua*, served *Baalim*. But the sacred historian assures us, that this was doing EVIL in the sight of the Lord. Whatever plausible and specious pretences may be devised by men, to support their idolatrous schemes, it may be observed, they have been found to be political stratagems, as in those of the golden ephod made by *Gideon*, and the two calves erected by *Jereboam*.

THE worshipping God under a symbol, is directly contrary to reason ; because this is making a stone the resemblance of him, of whom we cannot form an absolute perfect idea. Who hath seen the Lord at any time, or who can describe him? If the first idolaters, who invented this idol [*Baalim*] thought thereby to keep up the knowledge of a God. This might for some time have its desired effect : but could never lead men to those principles which alone would render them acceptable to their Creator. It was most likely, to lead them soon to pay that respect to the idol, which was due only to the almighty Being. This was the unhappy consequence. The people made them household gods, little images of this *Baalim* : others made the picture of him. These they fell down to, and worshipped the God of heaven before them. But this was idolatry, though a more innocent kind, than soon after obtained. This was the beginning of image-worship. The pretence was seemingly holy and good : but the practice was diabolical. The people soon forgot that under this image they paid divine honour,

I 3 unto



PART unto God: and indeed it was natural for

I.  them so to do. Thus was the worship of images introduced into the world, which blinded the reasons and understandings of men. And so numerous were these, in a short time, that each nation had one particular god, whom the people worshipped, as the protector of the city, or place, they lived in.

THE worship of images is irrational. Can a stone or an image preserve the life of a man? Did it give him life? Is the praying to an image available? Are images intercessors for man? To this reason answers, The image cannot benefit a man; the wood of it, while it remaineth in that form, is of no real service; nay, it is good for nothing, but to be burnt. It cannot add one day to his life, though he pray to, and confide in it never so much. Nor can he by observing the customs, or ceremonies, instituted to its honour, procure the remission of one single sin.

How vile and degenerate then is the doctrine of our brethren of the romish way,  
who

who teach that imagery is useful to the people. A crucifix, which is the portrait of Christ upon the cross, on mount *Calvary*, is much the same image, in respect of worship, as this *Baalim* was under which the people of *Israel* worshipped God. The crucifix is fixed at the east-end of their publick places of worship, they tell us, that the people may remember a crucified Saviour, and looking up, adore. This portrait is to keep up in the minds of the people a remembrance of Christ and his sufferings, and to put them in mind to pray unto him. An unworthy imprecator that needeth such help! The ignorant people continually keep their eye upon this picture, and in their service, cry out, *Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, &c.* And as the heathens, in length of time, invented divers gods: so the papists have set up the images of many of their saints, and the people worship before, and pray unto them. Besides these, they call upon departed persons to pray for them, who not having the honour to have their images erected on earth, are invoked in heaven.

## PART

## I.

THIS, I say, we are assured, is doing evil in the sight of the Lord. And as it is equal, at least, to the worship the first heathens paid to *Baalim*: so it certainly deserves the same character, namely, that of idolatry. And as the heathens invented deities: they soon found out to make them gods and goddesses: The papists have a multitude of she-images as well as male ones: which they increase either as the priests or people shall see occasion.

FROM what has been said, the reader may observe, that all images ought to be expunged out of all places of publick worship.

*BEEELZEBUB*, or *Belzebub*, an heathen idol among the *Eckronites*: he has his name from a fly, and was called upon against the ill influence of those creatures. They sacrificed unto him, and consulted him in sickness. *Abaziab* was one of this number. He having fell down through a lattice, sent messengers to this god to know whether he should recover of his sickness.

2 Kings i.  
8:

*BEEEL-*

**BEEL-PHEGOR**, or *Baal-peor*, an idol of the *Moabites*, to whom the children of *Israel* performed an impure and execrable worship. He was worshipped upon mount *Phegor*.

To mention no other heathen deity, it will suffice, that the sacred writings do in several places make mention of the idolatries of the heathens, by charging the *Israelites* with worshipping the gods of the nations: their desertion of the worship of the true God, and adoring images, idols, the works of their own hands; of whom it is said: “ who have the representation of eyes, and “ see not, and ears, and hear not, neither “ have they any understanding.” And the character of the idolaters is justly this: “ They that make them, are like unto “ them; and so are all they that put their “ trust in them.”

THIS in short, is the character or state, the writings of the *Old Testament* gives of the heathen people. And it would be easy to shew, that they continued idolatrous till the coming



**PART** coming of Christ, but this is beyond my  
**I.** present design, it being only to relate what  
 the scripture says of them.

**FROM** this state of the world, both of  
 jews and heathens, from the apostacy after  
 the deluge to the period of the Gospel, it  
 follows, that there was an absolute necessity  
 of a revelation of the will of **GOD** in or-  
 der to restore the human species to the  
 knowledge of their Creator.

**THIS** necessity laid on the part of man-  
 kind, whose circumstances of degeneracy in  
 manners, and total defection to idolatry,  
 except a few, were so gross, that the whole  
 world laboured in thick darkness, in vice  
 and superstition.



## CHAP. III.

### PROPHETIC EXPECTATION of a REVELATION of the Will of GOD.

I. *THE prophets did expect a revelation from heaven, which should supersede the mosaic law.* II. *Prophetic character of the REVEALER.* III. *The universality of this revelation.*

**T**HE position is, that good men duly reflecting upon the idolatrous and vicious state of the whole world, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, did expect a REVELATION of the will of GOD, to be made to ALL NATIONS.

THAT there were men under the jewish æconomy of this opinion, will appear from the writings of *Moses, David, Isaiah, &c.*

SECT.

## PART

## II

## SECT. I.

THE Prophets did expect a revelation from heaven, which should supersede the mosaic law.

MOSES, it is plain, was of this opinion: for, he after enumerating divers laws and ordinances which he commanded the jews to observe when they were come into the land of *Canaan*, expresth himself thus: "The Lord thy God will raise up  
" unto thee a prophet from the midst of  
" thy brethren, like unto me; unto him  
" ye shall hearken." *Deut. xviii. 15.*

THE rites and ceremonies of *Moses's* law was intended to keep that people separate from the rest of the world, and to make them the only true worshippers of God. These *Moses* foresaw would be abolished by a succeeding prophet who should arise among them. For thus he represents God as speaking: "And it shall come to pass that  
" whosoever will not hearken unto my  
" words which he shall speak in my name,  
" I

“ I will require it of him. ” The argument of *Moses* in this and the foregoing chapters, may be couched in these words :  
 “ Behold, ye men of Israel, ye are a numerous people, and ye shall separate  
 “ yourselves from the nations, ye shall destroy and kill all idolaters where-ever ye  
 “ come, their gods and their high-places shall ye burn with fire. This shall ye do  
 “ lest ye become idolaters like them. And when ye come into the land of Canaan, ye  
 “ shall build a temple unto the Lord your God, and there shall ye erect an altar,  
 “ and burn sacrifices unto him, but offer sacrifices unto him upon no other altar,  
 “ for ye are a separate people. Ye shall not eat the blood of the beasts which you  
 “ offer in sacrifice, as the heathen doth, but ye shall pour it upon the earth. Ye  
 “ shall put distinction between clean and and unclean beasts, for ye are a separate  
 “ people unto the Lord. But it shall come to pass in the last days, that there  
 “ shall arise up among you, a prophet like unto me, who shall break down the separation, unto him shall all people, nations and languages hearken, whether they  
 “ be



PART “ be of the seed of *Abraham*, or of the pa-  
 I. “ triarchs. And it shall come to pass, that  
 “ he that will not hearken to the words of  
 “ this prophet, shall be cut off from those  
 “ who hearken unto him.”

HERE, *Moses* himself did expect, that a prophet would arise in *Israel*, who would give unto the people a dispensation, not to be confined to the children of *Israel*, but to be declared to the whole world. He justly concluded, that this great prophet would preach a more excellent doctrine than he had taught, and that his principles would tend to make jews and heathens of one faith, and of one worship.

IT was not in the nature of the mosaic law to bring about these glorious events. His law by its natural tendency made both jews and gentiles inveterate enemies. *Moses* ordered the jews, to root out the nations, and destroy them : and the heathens endeavoured to destroy the jews. The jews prided themselves in being (as they thought) the chosen people of God, and were of opinion, that the Lord had respect to their washings, their

their burnt-sacrifices of bulls and of goats, CHAP.  
their purifications, &c. The way of wor- III.  
ship instituted by *Moses* did not tend to make  
men either more holy, or better neighbours  
than the rest of men.

IF it should be objected, that the decalogue of *Moses* did in itself tend to make men both happier in themselves, and so better friends or neighbours. This is no objection against what I have asserted of the ceremonial law, which in itself, pretending by outward means to make a man holy, came so far short of it, that the vices of the jews and the heathens were always equal.

I ALLOW that the decalogue or ten commandments do, if observed, tend both to the happiness of men in particular, and of society in general. And this certainly was the intention of *Moses* in giving them. But this design even as such was partial, it was to his own countrymen the jews only that he gave even these laws. But we are assured, that the expounders of this law, had by means of their tradition made this law of none effect. It is written in the second commandment,

PART mandment, "Thou shalt not make to thy-

I. "self any graven image, the likeness of

W "any thing in heaven above, or in the earth,

"or in the waters under the earth." *Moses*

made a fiery serpent, *Numb. xxi. 8, 9.* This

serpent the children of *Israel* (κ) burnt incense

unto till the days of good *Hezekiah*, who

to put an end to this idolatry broke it in

pieces. It may be presumed, that their learn-

ed rabbies or talmudists did not look upon

this practice of theirs as derogatory of the

honour due unto God, and therefore they

indulged the people in the worship they pay-

ed to this brazen serpent, and hereby made

this law of no availment. For this custom

was an open breach of this law, and as such

ought to have been detested by them. The

like might be said with equal justice of the

other commandments, but I forbear.

I AM

(κ) This worship of the brazen serpent did not begin whilst *Moses* was alive, but took place soon after his death. Had they presumed, in his days, to have burnt incense unto it, he would certainly have destroyed it, and have punished the transgressors of the law, [*Exod. xx. 2.*] as he did those who worshipped the golden calf, *ch. xxxii. 20, 27, 35.*

I AM not of opinion, that this decalogue is in itself a perfect system of morality, or even of natural religion. There are several moral duties which are not mentioned in it. As for example, thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thyself. This duty is moral, tho' no notice is taken of it in the decalogue. It is true, it is there written, Thou shalt not kill. It is a dictate of pure reason, that as every man in the whole world, is a member of society, and a sharer of the same privileges with us, claim an equal right to our love, as ourselves. *Moses*, indeed, does say: Thou shalt not kill, *i. e.* thou shalt not deprive any man of his life; yet he himself expounds this his law partially, as though he thus spake, "An  
" hebrew shall not take away the life of an  
" hebrew; but an hebrew shall kill an hea-  
" then." And the elders and scribes did say, That a man should love his friend, and hate his enemy.

IF it be urged, that every prohibition of the law enforce the contrary practice. As, Thou shalt not kill: implies, thou shalt do



130 *Prophetic Expectation of a Revelation*

PART all that is in thy power to preserve the life  
 I of every man; then the jews were obliged  
 by this law to secure the lives of the heathens, and not destroy them: as it is evident they did, even by *Moses's* command.

IN the fourth commandment it is said, that every seventh day shall be set apart for the service of God. Natural religion oblige men on all days to perform religious duties. By religious duties, I understand those which are due from one to another, even by the laws of nature, and all those duties which are the work of the soul, and tend to the perfection of our being.

BUT if it be allowed, (which I think is not possible) that the morality of the decalogue, is in itself equally perfect with the morality christianity has taught: yet it is evident, the jews, by corrupt glosses and traditions, soon made this law barren, obscured its lustre, and made it of none effect.

AND as for the scheme of morality contained in this decalogue, it is evident, that it was in being, and in practice before the flood,

flood, during the life of *Adam*; and after CHAP.  
the flood, during the life of *Noah*. So that III.  
when *Moses* wrote these laws, they were not  
novel things, consequently, the heathens  
were capable of forming rules of mora-  
lity as well as *Moses*: and it is no wonder,  
that theirs as well as his, are found to be  
an imperfect system, and not capable to  
bring men to the perfect knowledge of  
God.

THE royal psalmist, having shewn the  
rectitude of the works of the creation, con-  
cludes, that “ the law of the Lord is per- Psal. xix.  
“ fect, converting the soul: the testimonies 7.  
“ of the Lord is sure, making wise the  
“ simple.” The words may be read thus:  
The doctrine of the Lord shall be perfect,  
restoring the soul: the testimonies of the  
Lord shall be sure, making wise the simple.  
In this sense, they will be applicable to the  
perfect law of the gospel. \* The doctrine of  
the gospel is a perfect law, in comparison  
of which, all other systems are weak and  
imperfect. The witness God the Word  
gave unto man, to evidence the truth of  
his revelation, by signs and wonders, is,

**PART** and will always be sure: and it shall make  
**I.** wife unto salvation all people who will hear  
 his voice. From this, and divers other passages of *David*, it appears that he looked for a law (revelation) which should be perfect, and an abolition of the then present imperfect law of *Moses*: which was of no real good use: according to that of *St. Paul*, “The law made nothing perfect.” And again, “All who believe [all who receive the gospel] are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of *Moses*.”

Heb. vii.

19.

A&amp;S xiii.

39.

**THE** prophet *Isaiah* expected a revelation, which would enlighten the gentiles. He says, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” And again, he delivers his opinion in a poetic strain, introducing the Author of this revelation as thus speaking: “Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light to the people.”

“ My

Isa. ix. 2.

— li. 4.

“ My righteousness is near, my salvation CHAP.  
 “ is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge III.  
 “ the people, the isles shall wait upon me,  
 “ and in me shall they trust. Lift up your  
 “ eyes to the heavens, and look upon the  
 “ earth beneath: for the heavens shall va-  
 “ nish away like smoke, and the earth  
 “ shall wax old, like a garment, and they  
 “ that dwell therein shall die in like man-  
 “ ner: but my salvation shall be for ever,  
 “ and my righteousness shall not be abo-  
 “ lished.”

**JEREMIAH** delivers his opinion, that there would be a revelation from heaven, which would supersede the mosaic law. His flights are: “ Behold the days come, Jer. xxxi.  
 “ saith the Lord, that I will make a new 31, 32.  
 “ covenant with the house of Israel, and  
 “ with the house of Judah. Not accord-  
 “ ing to the covenant — made with their  
 “ fathers after they came out of Egypt.  
 “ But this is the covenant which I will  
 “ make. In those days, I will put my law  
 “ in their inward parts, and I will write it  
 “ in their hearts.”



## PART

## I.

AGAIN, *Ezekiel* says, that “ the law  
 “ shall perish from the priests, and coun-  
 “ sel from the ancients.” Hereby intima-  
 ting in the strongest terms, that the law of  
*Moses* should be abolished.

I ADD two passages more to shew, that  
 the prophets were of opinion, that the rites  
 and ceremonies of the mosaic law were in  
 themselves repugnant to the nature of God,  
 and as such not tending to the perfection of  
 men. Thus *Isaiab* expresses it: “ To what  
 “ purpose is the multitude of your sacri-  
 “ fices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full  
 “ of [I abhor] the burnt-offerings of rams,  
 “ and the fat of fed beasts. Bring no more  
 “ vain oblations, incense is an abomination  
 “ to me: your new-moons and your ap-  
 “ pointed feasts my soul abhorreth.” The  
 prophet fully persuaded, that these things  
 could not be acceptable to God, justly re-  
 presents them as repugnant to his nature:  
 and then proceeds to tell these vain wor-  
 shippers what were the duties required of  
 them: “ Cease to do evil, learn to do  
 “ well, seek judgment, relieve the oppres-  
 “ sed,

“ fed, judge the fatherless, plead for the  
 “ widow.” Such facrifices are available  
 before God, beneficial to fociety, and wor-  
 thy of man to perform. Again, *Jeremiab*  
 has thefe words: “ For I fpake not unto  
 “ your fathers, nor commanded them con-  
 “ cerning burnt-offerings or facrifices. But  
 “ this thing commanded I them, faying,  
 “ Obey my voice.”

CHAP.  
 III.

Jer. vii.  
 22, 23.

FROM what has been offered in this fec-  
 tion, arifes thefe three fubftantial truths:  
 1. That good men, under the jewifh œco-  
 nomy, did expect a revelation of the will  
 of God. 2. That this divine revelation  
 fhould fupersede and abolifh the mofaic in-  
 ftitution. And, 3. It does appear, that  
 they were of opinion, that the very nature  
 of the law required fuch an abolition.

## SECT. II.

PROPHETIC *character of the* REVEALER.

THE point is, that the prophets expect-  
 ing a divine revelation prophetically cha-  
 racterife the Revealer.

## PART

## I.

THESE men [the prophets] applied themselves to the pure dictates of reason, and from ancient prediction (1) justly concluded several grand truths.

*ISAIAH*, speaking of the darkness that covered all the people of the earth, says: "But the LORD shall arise upon thee." From which expression it is evident *Isaiab* prophetically expected, that the Being whose doctrine should expell this universal darkness, and whose light would arise upon all people, would be God. *The LORD shall arise upon thee.* And this farther appears from the mighty things he ascribes to him. He declares, that the doctrine of this Being, whom he stiles *JEHOVAH*, shall be so powerful, so convincing, and so glorious, that in those days the gentiles shall leave their superstitions and idolatries, forsake their temples: yea, even kings and emperours,

(1) *Ancient prediction.*] The promise of God to our first parents, *Gen.* iii. 15: his promise to *Abraham*, ch. xii. 3. xxii. 18: the prophetic blessing of *Jacob* on his son *Judab*, ch. xlix. 10: and, the prophecy of *Moses*, *Dent.* xviii. 15, 18.

emperours, who generally are for maintain- CHAP.  
ing old schemes of religion instituted by III.

their predecessors; these very men, he says, shall come to the brightness of his law, become followers of his doctrine, imbibers of his principles, and protectors of all those who come unto this light. And they and all men shall praise the Lord for the light which he hath given unto men. [See *Isa. lx.*]

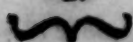
In another place *Isaiab* styles the Revealer, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER. Surely he asserts, that the Being he is speaking of, and who, he says, shall be born among us: is God, very God, God without beginning and without end. Again, he introduces this mighty God thus: "Behold I lay for a foundation, a stone--  
" he that believeth shall not make haste."

The foundation and stone are certain allegories. They denote the excellence of the revelation which that Being, the Lord God, when he should appear among men, would deliver unto them. He who builds upon those fundamental principles God has revealed, will soon find, that the foundation is laid in a rock, immoveable, enduring for ever.



## PART

## I.



IT was the opinion of this prophet, that in the days, wherein this mighty Being would appear in the flesh, the intellectual faculties of men should be enlightened, and their tongues speak plainly the words of truth. *Isa.* xxxii. 3, 4. where speaking of the blessings which shall accrue to men, by virtue of the revelation which the Lord God would publish, he says: “ And the eyes  
 “ of them that see shall not be dim: and  
 “ the ears of them that hear, shall hearken.  
 “ The heart also of the rash shall under-  
 “ stand knowledge, and the tongue of the  
 “ stammerers shall speak plainly.” At the sixth verse of this chapter, he tells us, that vile persons would oppose the doctrine of God, and speak against that revelation he, in those days, would publish. “ For the  
 “ vile person will speak villany, and his  
 “ heart will work iniquity, to practise hy-  
 “ pocrisy, to utter error against the  
 “ Lord, to make empty the soul of the  
 “ hungry, and he will cause the drink of  
 “ the thirsty to fail.” That is: in those days, wherein it shall come to pass, that the Lord shall descend from heaven, and  
 declare

declare the gospel of redemption, wicked CHAP.  
and sinful men, who delight in iniquity, III.  
will feign themselves holy and religious :  
and, under this pretence, broach opinions  
contrary to the doctrines of this revelation ;  
whereby those men, who have waited with  
all earnestness for the glad tidings of salva-  
tion, will be deprived of its benefits. He  
against whom these heretical men will utter  
*error, Isaiab says, is, the Lord.*

IN the next chapter he gives him the  
same character : “ O LORD be gracious,  
“ we have waited for thee. The LORD  
“ dwelleth on high.” And soon after he  
introduces this almighty Being thus speak-  
ing : “ Now, will I rise, saith the LORD,  
“ now will I be exalted, now will I lift up  
“ myself.” Again, *Isaiab* says, “ The  
“ LORD is our judge, the LORD is our  
“ lawgiver, the LORD is our king HE WILL  
“ SAVE US.” And in the following chap-  
ter this same prophet foretelling the joyful  
state of the gospel, or revelation of God,  
says : “ And the ransomed of the LORD  
“ shall return with songs, and everlasting  
“ joy upon their heads : they shall obtain  
“ joy

PART "joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing  
 I. "shall flee away." These are the happy  
 attendants of all those who sincerely embrace the gospel of redemption. And that man who imbibes the principles of truth, making them his own, those principles will ransom him from his captivity, and bring him to the happy restoration of future everlasting joy and gladness.

No other being can be intended by the following expressions, but God himself; where *Isaiah*, speaking of the times of the almighty Redeemer, says: that "all the people shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our GOD. Be strong, fear not, your GOD will come with a recompence, HE WILL COME AND SAVE YOU." Then [in those days when this almighty Being shall descend from heaven and reveal himself to men] *the eyes of the blind shall be opened*, [the understandings of men shall be enlightened and enlarged] *and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped*, [and those very organs of the human race, which for a long time have been deaf to the laws of virtue and holiness, shall be opened and  
 freely

freely attend to the dictates of truth and salvation.] And so catholic, he apprehended, would be the principles of this Being that he declares, that in his days there shall “ be a high-way, and it shall be called the “ way of holiness, the unclean shall not “ pass over it, but it shall be for those : “ the wayfaring men, though fools, shall “ not err therein.” The Privileges redounding to men by the revelation of redemption, are certain proofs, that the Author of it was God. This *way of holiness*, signifies, the doctrine and principles of him whom *Isaiab* styles, THE LORD OUR REDEEMER. He that receives the law of the Lord, he it is, and he only, that walketh on this high way, or way of holiness ; but as for all those, who will not come into the terms of redemption, whom the prophet here calls the unclean, after the mosaic mode of speech, they shall not pass over it. So plain and easy is the observation of the principles of this revelation, that all may attain to the knowledge and practice of them, whether they are illiterate or servile, *even wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*



## PART

## I.

IN *Chap. xliiii. Isaiab* introduces the Revealer of the gospel, or the giver of a great light to the whole world, thus speaking:

“ But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, thou art mine. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” The plain prophetic signification of which words is: that that Being who created the heavens and the earth would redeem the world, and whose doctrine would be received in all parts of it. Again, “ Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed or confounded world without end. For thus saith the LORD, that created the heavens, God himself who formed the earth, and established it, I am the LORD, and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, I said not, seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things

“ things that are right.” The prophet sensible, that all nations and people were to be joint partakers of the blessings bestowed by the Revealer, introduces him thus calling upon the inhabitants of the world: “ Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am GOD, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, that unto me shall every knee bow, and every tongue swear. Behold I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and all shall know that I am the LORD.”

JEREMIAH gives a prophetic character of the Revealer, in this expression:

“ THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Jer. xxiii.  
6.

THE prophet *Micah* predicting the period of the gospel says: In those days shall arise out of the thousands of Judah, “ HE Micah v. whose goings forth hath been from of old, 2. “ from everlasting:” or as the margin reads it, *from the days of eternity.*

MALACHI, expecting the almighty Revealer of salvation, says: “ The LORD Mal. iii. 1. “ whom

PART "whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his

I. "temple."



THEY expected likewise, that he would appear in a low and suffering state, with respect to his outward circumstances: two or three instances will suffice. *Daniel* says,

Dan. ix.  
26.

"After threescore and ten weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself."

*Isaiab* delivers his opinion in these words:

Isa. lii. 14.

"As many were astonished at thee: (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the

— liii. 2,  
&c.

sons of men.) For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root, out of a dry ground, he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for  
"our

“ our iniquities: the chastisement of our CHAP.  
 “ peace was upon him, and with his stripes III.  
 “ we are healed. He was oppressed, and  
 “ he was afflicted, yet he opened not his  
 “ mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the  
 “ slaughter, and as a sheep before her  
 “ shearers is dumb, so he opened not his  
 “ mouth. Who shall declare his genera-  
 “ tion? for he was cut off out of the land  
 “ of the living.” *Zechariah* prophetically  
 describing the low and suffering condition of  
 the almighty Redeemer, says: “ Awake, *Zech. xiii.*  
 “ O sword, against the MAN that is my<sup>7</sup>  
 “ Fellow, [MY EQUAL] saith the Lord  
 “ of hosts.”

IT now follows: 1. That the prophets  
 expected, that the Revealer of this revela-  
 tion would come from heaven. 2. That  
 the Revealer would be GOD himself, the  
 second distinction in the GODHEAD, the  
 Eternal WORD. 3. That his government  
 or kingdom would be spiritual, not tem-  
 poral. 4. Accordingly, they expected when  
 he should appear, that he would not assume  
 the character of a king, but that of a pro-  
 phet, exposed to suffering.

L

SECT.



## PART

## I.

## SECT. III.

*THE universality of this revelation.*

THE last thing to be handled in this chapter is, that the prophets did expect that this revelation would be for the common benefit of the whole world, jews and gentiles.

Moses, the jewish lawgiver, by his institutes, inclosed the seed of *Jacob*, and made them a peculiar people, separate (as he terms it) to the Lord: to this end, he forbid them to intermarry with the heathens, ordered them to put distinctions between meats clean and unclean, and to observe a large catalogue of rites and ceremonies, with no other view, but to keep them separate from idolaters and their superstitions. He also commanded them, that they should destroy the heathen people without mercy. By this means, the heathens and jews became inveterate and irreconcilable enemies, and they both, as opportunity served, repayed each other's cruelty,

as is evident from the sacred story. And it is plain they continued in a state of enmity, vice and superstition till the coming of Christ.

CHAP-  
III.

It must therefore be thought a thing possible in the very nature of it, that some good men, who lived several hundred years before the advent of this almighty Revealer, might, by a due use of their intellectual faculties, and from true and rational apprehensions they had entertained of the glorious and beneficent nature of the divine Being, that when he appeared, the doctrines he should teach, would tend to make both jews and gentiles of one faith, and of one mind, bring in more generous and more noble principles, than were in those days to be found among men, and expell that gross darkness which had overspread, not only the gentile world, but even the family of *Abraham* itself. An idea worthy of a dispensation they expected should be introduced by the Lord of heaven and earth. And that there were such men, under the jewish œconomy, who duly attending to the pure dictates of their souls, con-

PART cluded, that the revelation, they expected,  
 I. would be for the common benefit of all the  
 sons of *Adam*, without exception of any  
 one single person, will appear from a cita-  
 tion of some prophetic passages in the  
 books of the *Old Testament*.

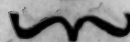
I JUDGE, our first instance, is, the  
 prophecy of the patriarch *Jacob*, father of  
 Gen. xlix. the jewish people. "The sceptre shall not  
 10. "depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from  
 "between his feet, until Shiloh come,  
 "and unto him shall the gathering of the  
 "people be." *Jacob* when he delivered  
 these words was upon his death-bed, at-  
 tended by his whole family. The patriarch  
 had separated them from the whole world  
 by circumcision, and by a prohibition of  
 idolatry. His argument is this: Hear, O  
 my sons, the time of my death approaches,  
 it will be necessary that there should be one  
 of you, who should succeed me in the go-  
 vernment and rule of the family, I there-  
 fore appoint *Judah* my successor, and be ye  
 subject unto him, as in my stead: the go-  
 vernment of my family thus constituted  
 and appointed by me, shall continue in the  
 family

family of *Judab* till the days of the promise made unto our fathers: in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: untill which time the government shall be in the house of *Judab*, and he shall keep up the separation between ye and the people of the nations: but it shall come to pass when *Sbilob* is come, in whom the promise made unto our fathers and unto us, will be fulfilled, that the royalty I, at this day, give unto thee *Judab* shall cease, no prince shall arise after his appearance of thy posterity; and know ye this, that in those days *Sbilob* shall publish a law, not like unto the law of separation, which I have given unto ye, for your particular use; but a law that will supersede this law of separation, brake down this inclosure, and become a rule to all the nations of the earth; they shall be obedient to his law and government: you and they will be governed by one rule, enjoy equal privileges, and receive one common benefit: the present nations, the *Egyptians*, *Chaldæans*, *Kenites*, *Perizzites*, *Jebusites*, &c. will gather themselves together unto him.



## PART

## I.



OUR next instance to be offered, in order to prove, that the prophets expected the revelation to be universal, I take to be that of *Moses*, Deut. xviii. 18, 19. where having told his brethren of a prophet that God would raise up among them, concludes his prophecy thus: “ And it shall  
 “ come to pass, that WHOSOEVER will not  
 “ hearken unto my words which he shall  
 “ speak in my name, I will require it of  
 “ him.

THE psalmist prophesying the universality of the evangelical dispensation, says: Psal. cx.3. that God will then *rule in the mids of his enemies*, that is, the heathens will hear his voice, become partakers of his favour, and imbibe those doctrines and principles he would introduce. Which he more particularly signifies by these prophetic flights:  
 Ver. 4. “ Thy people shall be willing in the day of  
 “ thy power, in the beauties of holiness,  
 “ from the womb of the morning, thou  
 “ hast the dew of thy youth.” The heathen world were always accounted by the jews, the enemies of the Lord. The royal prophet

prophet stiles them, enemies: *Rule thou in* CHAP.  
*the mids of thine enemies.* Not that he in- III.  
tends by the expression, that all the hea-

thens would be enemies to the gospel; but only, that the very heathens, who then were enemies (*i. e.* idolaters) to God, would in after-times submit to be governed by his laws. It is prophetic, that heathens as well as jews would in the days of the almighty Revealer hearken to his voice, return unto him, and learn and observe his statutes.

And this is plain from the following words, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*: so though they were enemies at the time of this prophecy; yet *David*, when he comes to speak of them as under the influence of Christ and his gospel, says: *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, *i. e.* those, who before were thy enemies, upon hearing thy revelation, the glorious tidings of salvation and redemption, will become thy subjects. The meaning of the words is this: There are now in the world worshippers of stocks and stones: but it shall come to pass in the days of the Revealer, who will come down from heaven, that the doctrines which he will teach shall

PART bring multitudes of these idolaters off from  
 I. their superstition, make them in love with  
 truth, cause them to think worthily of God,  
 as their Creator and Redeemer, and introduce among them good manners, peace and charity.

THE prophet *Isaiab* foretelling the universality of the gospel state, says: "And  
 " it shall come to pass in the last days:  
 " that all nations shall flow unto it;" that is, all the nations of the earth will then have an equal right to the benefits of the revelation, and that most, if not all, will hearken to it. Again, "And he shall judge among  
 " the nations." In *Cb. xi.* he tells us, that  
 " the earth shall be full of the knowledge  
 " of the Lord, as the waters cover the  
 " sea." *ver. 9.* And then he proceeds and foretells, that the Revealer would set up an ensign, to which the gentiles would seek; that his reign would be glorious, and that his law will be mild: it will reconcile all nations, make one great assembly of the heathen people, the out-casts of *Israel* and the dispersed of *Judab*, and cause the envy between all people to cease, *ver. 10, &c.*

In

In another place, having mentioned the sad CHAP.  
estate of all the people, he says: "So it III.

"will be untill the SPIRIT be poured  
"upon us from on high, and [then] the  
"wilderness [shall] be a fruitful field, and  
"the fruitful field shall be counted for a  
"forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the  
"wilderness." By the *Spirit* here said to

*be poured upon us from on high*, I understand,  
the glorious dispensation of the gospel re-  
vealed and proclaimed unto men. By the  
*Wilderness* being said to become a *fruitful*  
*field*, that the heathen world would embrace  
the gospel, and so become partakers of its  
benefits. In those days, the prophet says,  
the *fruitful field* will be counted for a *forest*:  
by which I presume is meant, that the jews  
who were, at that time, like a fruitful field,  
would become in after-time enemies to the  
*Spirit*, [*i. e.* to the gospel dispensation] and  
so be accounted by all men as a *Forest*.

The prophet adds: *Then* [that is, in those  
days, wherein the SPIRIT (the gospel dis-  
pensation) shall be poured upon us from on  
high] *judgment shall dwell in the wilderness*.

The heathens embracing the gospel are here  
alluded to: they becoming true disciples of  
Christ



PART Christ practise among themselves *judgment*.

I. Under which word are comprehended all moral duties ; but more especially all those that respect the peace and quiet of mankind. For it follows : “ And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of “ righteousness, quietness and assurance for “ ever.” These are the glorious consequences of a true and upright way of action : privileges redounding to the sincere observers of those revealed rules which tend to salvation. Again, *Cb. xlii. 4. Isaiab*, having recorded many passages, which represent the peaceable and benign temper of the Revealer of redemption, says : “ He “ shall set judgment in the earth : and the “ isles shall wait for his law.” Hereby asserting in the strongest terms, that the doctrines which he would give unto the world, would through their own internal excellency, the ray of divinity, which their divine Author hath stamped on them, become through their general reception a method for JUDGMENT in the earth. And to shew, that all people, gentiles as well as jews, were to be benefited by the expected revelation, the prophet introduces the almighty

mighty Redeemer thus calling upon the inhabitants of the whole world: "Listen, CHAP. III.

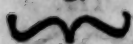
"O isles, unto me, and hearken ye people from far." From all these instances of the prophecy of *Isaiab*, it follows, that the prophet expected, the heathen world would be joint-partakers, with his countrymen, of the privileges which God the Son, at his appearance, would give unto men.

*EZEKIEL* affords an instance of this expectation. He makes this comparison: "As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men, and they SHALL KNOW that I am the LORD." It was customary for the jews, at their great feasts, to go up from all parts of *Judea* and its neighbouring cities to *Jerusalem*, as they were appointed by the law of *Moses*. The meaning of *Ezekiel* is this: As the jews flock to the holy city to perform their ceremonial rites on their solemn festivals thrice in a year: so shall the heathens flock into the Knowledge of the Lord.

*DANIEL,*

## PART

## I.



*DANIEL*, speaking of the latter time, or time of Christ says, of all people without exception, “ Many shall be purified, made  
“ white and tried : but the wicked shall do  
“ wickedly, and none of the wicked shall  
“ understand, but the wise shall understand.”  
I judge the prophet intends by the expression, that when Christ should appear, many people of all nations, from the one end of the earth to the other, gentiles as well as jews, would embrace his doctrines and by a due and voluntary observation of right and just principles become free from injustice, vice, idolatry and all superstition : that in these days, men would entirely be left at liberty whether they would use the means for the attainment of these virtues, they may then do wickedly, who are so minded ; that such a blindness will be the consequence of this their irrational way of action, they will be so far degenerated in their intellects, that they will scarcely understand the gospel of their almighty Saviour : and that all those who chuse righteousness they will understand the benefit of the gospel, eternal redemption.

THE

THE prophet *Micah* predicting the universality of the kingdom of the evangelical dispensation, says: "It shall be great unto the ends of the earth." He thought certainly that the kingdom of Christ was to be of greater extent than those parts of the world only where his own countrymen inhabited, and that all the people would become subject to his laws, which he expresses by his being *great unto the ends of the earth*.

THE prophet *Zechariah* speaking of the last days, by which we are to understand the days of the gospel, says, "In that day, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine, and under the fig-tree." *i. e.* When the Lord our Redeemer shall descend from heaven, and appear among us, and declare his will unto us, the present enmity betwixt the gentiles and us shall entirely cease, and then we shall call every man our neighbour or friend, without distinction of nation or people.

THUS it fully appears, that there were good men, under the jewish œconomy, who



**PART** who did expect a revelation of the divine will to be made to all people. These conclusions therefore of the prophets are just apprehensions of a Being infinitely beneficent, worthy of him, the Author of all created things, worthy of him who is just and impartial, merciful and holy, and worthy of him, whose sublime generosity has condescended to declare unto us the glad tidings of salvation.

I IMAGINE I have now satisfactorily evidenced to my reader the truth of these three points.

1. THE validity of the writings of *Moses*.
2. THE necessity of a revelation, (by giving him a view of the idolatrous and wicked state of the whole world both jews and gentiles,) in order to bring mankind to the knowledge of God. And
3. THAT the prophets (convinced of such a necessity) did expect a revelation of the will of God to be made to all nations and people.

HAVING now passed through the expectant prophetic evidence in behalf of christianity,

christianity, I proceed to enquire into and demonstrate the REALITY of the matter of fact itself. Where I shall lay before the reader,

CHAP.  
III.  
~

1. THE Validity of the Writings of the *New Testament*, particularly of the four Gospels.

2. SHEW from these Writings, that at the time of our Lord's miraculous assumption of our nature, and his publick appearance in *Judea*, there was a general expectation, among all people, of the rise of some great and extraordinary person.

3. ASSERT the divinity of our Saviour, from the title of God, ascribed to him by several persons at that time, and in particular from the claim he himself made to this title.

4. LAY before the reader the internal excellency of christianity, and shew from the natural and intrinsic tendency of its doctrines, that it must have God for its Author; that it tends to our present and future happiness, and therefore lays claim to our assent and consent.

5. THE

**PART** 5. THE next chapter treats of the Miracles Christ wrought, as external evidences of the internal excellency of his doctrines.

**I.** 6. THE last chapter shews, that the prophecies of the *Old Testament* were literally and obviously fulfilled in Christ and the matters relating to him.



**CHAP.**

## CHAP. IV.

### The Validity of the WRITINGS of the NEW TESTAMENT.

- I. *THE jews (particularly Josephus) testify the truth of divers facts and events recorded in the four Gospels.* II. *The heathens (especially Pilate) testify the fundamental facts and events of the Gospel history.* III. *Arguments offered to establish the validity of these writings.* IV. *Of the epistles of Paul, Peter, James, &c.*

**I**N order to prove the REALITY of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, it will be necessary, briefly, to lay before the Reader, testimonies of the credibility of the fundamental facts and events of its history, contained in the writings of the *New Testament*. By which I intend an appeal to the pure dictates of his  
M reason,



PART reason, whether they do not lay a strong  
 I. claim to his faith and credence, and upon  
 that account, be acknowledged by him as  
 a true and valid narrative.

## SECT. I.

THE jews (particularly Josephus) testify the  
 truth of divers facts and events recorded in  
 the four Gospels.

I. ST. Matthew says, That our Saviour  
 CHRIST was miraculously born of Mary,  
 the espoused wife of Joseph, in the town of  
 Betlehem in Judea, that he preached the  
 kingdom of heaven, that the people were  
 astonished at his doctrine, and that he laid  
 claim to the title of the Messiah. “ All  
 things are delivered unto me of my Fa-  
 ther, and no man knoweth the Son but  
 the Father: neither knoweth any man  
 the Father, save the Son, and he to  
 whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”  
 St. Mark records his claim of the Messiah-  
 ship on this occasion: some had said of  
 Christ, that he was Elias, John the Baptist,  
 or one of the prophets; which the disciples  
 having

having told Jesus, he saith unto them, CHAP.

IV.

“ But whom say ye that I am? Peter an-

“ swereth and saith unto him, Thou art the

“ Christ. And he charged them that they Mark viii.

“ should tell no man of him.” St. Luke re- 29, 30.

lates the claim Christ made to the Messiah-

ship upon occasion of *John*’s being in prison,

and sending two of his disciples to ask him,

Whether he was the Messiah? Our Lord in

the presence of these men cured many of

their infirmities and plagues, and restored

sight to many that were blind. They ha-

ving been eye-witnesses of these miraculous

works, Christ said to them, “ Go your way, Luke vi.

“ and tell John what things ye have seen and 19, 26.

“ heard: how that the blind see, the lame

“ walk, the lepers are cleansed, the dead

“ are raised, to the poor the gospel is

“ preached. And blessed is he who shall

“ shall not be offended in me.” St. *John*

records his claim thus: “ I come (says John xvi.

“ Christ) forth from the Father, and am 28.

“ come into the world.”

THE jews acknowledge, that at the time  
fixed by the christians, there did appear a  
very extraordinary person, who laid claim

PART to the title of the Messiah, that he was stiled,  
 I. the king of the jews, and that the sect of the  
 christians sprung from him, and do continue  
 to this day. They allow, that Christ was  
 a very great prophet; but they deny him to  
 be the Messiah, because they expected, that  
 when he appeared, he would restore their  
 state from the roman slavery to their ancient  
 privileges and freedom. Thus they own  
 this fact recorded by our evangelists.

Matth. iv. 2. St. *Matthew* tells us, that Christ heal-  
 24. ed all manner of sickness, and diseases among  
 Mark i. 34. the people. St. *Mark*, that he healed ma-  
 Luke vii. ny that were sick of divers diseases. St. *Luke*,  
 14, 15. that he raised a widow's son from the dead.  
 John xi. And St. *John*, that he raised a man, whose  
 43, 44. name was *Lazarus*, to life, who had been  
 dead and buried four days. Agreeable to  
 this, the jews say, that one Jesus of *Naza-  
 reth*, a prophet, did many signs and won-  
 ders among the people; they allow that he  
 performed the miracles recorded of him;  
 but to evade the force of the argument ari-  
 sing from hence, they maliciously object,  
 that he performed them by diabolical arts,  
 and a mysterious use or pronounciation of the  
 word

word JEHOVAH, which they call, Tetra-grammaton. Thus they testify that Christ was a worker of miracles.

CHAP.  
IV.

3. ST. *Matthew*, and the other three evangelists, say, that the jews crucified Christ, and that this was done when *Pontius Pilate* was governour in *Judea*. They own these facts; but add, that he suffered for blasphemy. This they say to justify themselves in putting, or procuring the death of one who was really innocent: and is no more than an aspersion.

4. THE evangelists tell us, that Christ rose from the dead the third day. The jews testify this fact thus: they say, that this *Jesus of Nazareth* boasted before he died, that he would rise from the dead on the third day; to accomplish which, his disciples early in the morning on the third day, stole him away, and have ever since said, he is risen from the dead.

THUS they own our *JESUS*, and the facts relating to him: And can any thing more be expected from persons so malicious



PART as the jews were? Could it be expected that  
 I. they should tell the very truth, or all the  
 truth, and so do his character the real justice it deserved? I judge it sufficient they own that a person of the character they give him, whose name was Christ, did really appear, worked many signs and wonders, died under *Pontius Pilate*, and that upon his death a great number of his followers appeared, under the name of christians, and that their sect continues to this day.

NOTWITHSTANDING which, it does appear that some jews more addicted to justice and truth, than those we have now been speaking of, did do his character the justice it really deserved. *Josephus*, a firm jew, who lived when these things were fresh in the minds of all men, in his jewish history, speaking of the time of *Pilate*, and the affairs relating to his government, says, That  
 “ at that time, JESUS lived, ‘a man of  
 “ wisdom and knowledge, if it be just and  
 “ right to stile him a man; for he was the  
 “ performer of many surprizing and astonishing works, the teacher of all those  
 “ who with joy and pleasure received and  
 “ imbibed

“ imbibed the truth, infomuch, that many  
“ of the jews, and of the greeks joy-  
“ ed themselves unto him. This was the  
“ CHRIST, whom the chief men of our  
“ nation, accused before *Pilate*, and who  
“ underwent the death of the cross; not-  
“ withstanding, his followers did not desert  
“ the truth: for on the third day, he rose  
“ from the dead, and appeared unto them,  
“ as the prophets of God had said, con-  
“ cerning this, and a thousand other won-  
“ derful things, appertaining to him. And  
“ from him the race of the christians have  
“ their name, who continue to this day.\*”

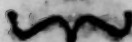
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IN

\* Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς, σοφὸς ἀνὴρ, εἶγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρῆ. ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνδράπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τάλανθῇ δεχομένων· καὶ πολλοὺς μὴν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο. ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν, σαυρῶ ἐπιτετιμηκὸς Πιλάτου, οὐν ἐπαυσαντο οἷτε πρώτον αὐτὸν ἀγαπήσαντες. ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν, τῶν θείων ταῦτα τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία θαυμάσια περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι νῦν τῶν χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὀνομασμένων οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φυλον. Flavii Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xviii. c. 4. p. 798.

## PART

## I.



IN this passage *Josephus* candidly acknowledged the truth of the fundamental history of christianity. He says, 1. That there did appear under *Pontius Pilate*, a Person whose name was *Jesus*. 2. That this *Jesus* performed so many surprizing and astonishing works, that he judged, he deserved a much more noble title than that of a man. 3. That the priests and elders of the jewish nation at *Jerusalem*, did accuse him before *Pilate*, and so procured his death. 4. That on the third day, he did arise from the dead, and appeared unto his disciples. And lastly, That the race of the christians sprang from him, and was in being at the time he wrote his history, which he finished in the fifty-sixth year of his age, in A. D. 93.

## SECT. II.

THE *beathens*, (especially *Pilate*) testify the fundamental facts and events of the gospel history.

THE *Romans* expected from their deputies of provinces, narratives of notorious events,

events. The affairs of Jesus of *Nazareth* CHAP.  
were such as engaged the attention of the IV.  
whole world, and consequently, made a great  
noise and stir in *Judea*, the scene of action.  
*Pilate* was then governour, and he was the  
person, before whom Jesus was tried, and  
by whose order he was put to death. *Pilate*  
sent to *Rome* an account of our Lord's in-  
nocence, his excellent doctrine, and his  
wonderful works; such, as his raising the  
dead, healing the sick and lame, &c. and  
that he was forced through the impetuous  
clamours of the jews to put him (though  
innocent) to death; that at his death there  
was a great earthquake, and a miraculous  
darkness; that it was credibly reported,  
that this Jesus was risen from the dead,  
and that he was since ascended into hea-  
ven. This account was enrolled by the  
order of the emperor in the public records  
at *Rome*. And the emperor is credibly re-  
ported to have proposed to the senate: that  
this Jesus should be admitted into the num-  
ber of their gods. *Justin Martyr* and *Ter-*  
*tullian*, who flourished in the very next cen-  
tury after Christ, in their apologies for chri-  
stianity, appeal to the emperor and the se-  
nate,



PART nate, and to the records for the truth of

I. these fundamental facts, to justify the christian faith. Nay, avowed enemies, such as *Celsus*, *Julian*, &c. own, that there was such a person as Christ, and that he performed many miracles ; but object, that he wrought them by virtue of the magic art.


### SECT. III.

ARGUMENTS offered to establish the validity of these writings.

BUT could it be supposed, that we had no such evidence, as I have mentioned, to support the truth and validity of the christian writings, or facts, of which the four gospels and the acts of the apostles treat, from jews and pagans ; yet we might credit its narratives upon the following accounts.

I. THE universal assent and consent of the disciples of Christ to the truth of these facts and events, in all ages, since the time wherein they are said to be done. For I cannot see, why we should lay so great stress upon the testimony of the adversaries of

of Christ and his doctrine, as to value and respect it before that of its friends, or believers. I am certain, in the common occurrences of life we are rather willing to believe and trust our friends than our enemies. We chuse to credit the relations of the former, and reject those of the latter. And, I am sure, no man can affirm, that this method is contrary to the law of prudence; but must, if he gives himself the least reflexion, own, that it is highly consonant with and agreeable thereto. Now, why should not the same way of argument be allowed in the cause of christianity? why should not the same law of prudence take place in this momentous affair, which we commonly make use of in the mundane transactions of our lives? Ought not the testimonies of the friends and believers of the christian religion to be preferred before those of its enemies and despisers? Ought not the simple and plain narratives of christianity to be received by us, and those full of malice and misrepresentation to be rejected? If the malicious accounts of the enemies of Christ are of any real service, it is this; that they serve, in a low degree,

CHAP.  
IV.  


to

PART to corroborate the esteem we ought to have  
of the accounts handed down to us by the  
friends of christianity; for, it ought to be  
considered, that if we must be determined  
by our enemies as to the truth of the christian  
facts, then we must of consequence  
believe no christian facts and events, but  
those they are pleased to own and acknow-  
ledge were really true: we then also must  
be determined by them in relation to the  
circumstantials of such real facts and events,  
as they have been pleased to allow for truth.  
All which would be highly ridiculous and  
imprudent. But I cannot help remarking  
here, that I look upon the growth of scepti-  
cism and infidelity to be owing, in some  
measure, to our great fondness of the testi-  
mony of our enemies; as though it was  
solely and absolutely material to prove the  
reality of christianity; because, it follows,  
that if they be made the deciders of the  
controversy, their judgment and veracity  
are thereby allowed to be superior to those  
of the friends of Christ and his doctrine;  
and so it is no wonder, that the sceptic and  
libertine will not credit any one christian  
fact or event, but what they find positively  
owned

owned and acknowledged as real, by the **CHAP.**  
avowed enemies of truth and christianity. **IV.**

And the truth so received by the sceptic, will be held by him with the circumstantialists, the enemy of that very truth was pleased to relate with it. It therefore follows, that the testimony of the friends of christianity should be preferred to that of its enemies.

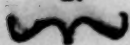
2. ESPECIALLY, if it be considered, that the testimony of our enemies is extorted from them ; but that of our friends is the off-spring of real conviction of the truth of the facts, events and doctrines they relate : that of the former must be partial, but, it is certain, (in the case of christianity) that of the latter are impartial : the reports of the former are full of malice, those of the latter are endued with justice and truth. The testimony of the former may serve in a small degree to establish our belief of the christian facts and events ; but if the testimony of the latter be rejected, I am certain, the facts of christianity are thereby deprived of their main evidence, and consequently of their true external support.

3. THE



## PART

## I.



3. THE gospel history, or history of christianity, was wrote some years before the destruction of *Jerusalem*. This history was received by all sorts of christians, and read publickly in their assemblies, some part of it, at least, every time they met together. And this was the custom of the apostolic age, and has been the general practice of christians in all ages of the church down to this present time. This is a publick testimony of the truth of the gospel history. It is certain, these men looked upon the facts and doctrines therein contained, to be really true. Nay, this is indisputable, from the writings of the first christians, against divers eminent heathens. And these men have delivered them to the succeeding posterities of christians as a true, credible, and well-attested history. And if the numbers of the believers of these facts, may be allowed to weigh any thing in this matter, they must be owned to be equal (I judge superior) to those who are enemies thereto.

4. THEY were not imposed on. Nor could they be imposed on. This appears from

from the whole scheme of christianity. 1. Its CHAP. doctrines tend to the spiritual benefit of IV. mankind: its rewards are future. 2. The miracles of our Saviour, are acts of beneficence, of pity and compassion. For the first christians could not be ignorant of the doctrines of christianity, nor of their efficacy and tendency to make men happy hereafter. Nor could they be ignorant of the many miracles wrought by our Saviour. Thus it appears they could not be imposed on.

5. NOR did they endeavour to impose upon after-ages. They could have no temptation to this. The gospel did not propose grandeur. They were sure of meeting with persecution. They saw their Master die: and they expected this must be their case, if they taught the same doctrine. In short, there does not appear in their actions any sinister view whatever.

6. UPON the whole. The bare history of the doctrines, facts and acts of christianity appear upon review of them to have all the marks and characteristics of truth that

PART that are sufficient to prejudice a rational  
 I. man in favour of them. The plainness  
 and simplicity with which they are penned,  
 the apparent veracity and credibility of the  
 several relations, and the harmonious cir-  
 cumstantials of them challenge assent.

IF to all this be added, That our evan-  
 gelists were persons intimately conversant  
 with Christ, (two of them particularly,  
*Matthew and John*) and eye-witnesses of the  
 events and facts recorded by them, we may  
 safely confide in their history, as in itself  
 true and valid.

FROM the whole, it appears an esta-  
 blished truth, That the writings of the four  
 evangelists do contain an history true and  
 credible : and as such, to be firmly relied  
 on.

#### SECT. IV.

OF the epistles of Paul, Peter, James, &c.

As the four gospels were extant, and  
 used publickly within thirty years after the  
 ascension,

ascension of Christ, so it is affirmed, that CHAP. the epistles of St. *Paul*, *Peter*, &c. were all IV. published before A. D. 100. They have been ever since constantly looked on as a part of the canon of scripture, and as such, used by the church in all ages down to this present time. Our church words her reception of these epistles, and the other books of the *New Testament* thus: "All the books of the NEW TESTAMENT, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account them canonical \*."

I ADD the consideration of an apparent evidence in behalf of the truth of the writings of the apostles; which is: that the subject matter of their writings, in the most exact manner, corresponds and agrees with the doctrinal part of the gospels. These writings have been looked upon, and esteemed by all men, in all ages of christianity, as a part of the christian doctrine: and this their universal reception among all persons, plainly testify, that they are the writings of the persons whose names they bear.

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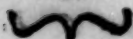
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\* See ART. VI.



## PART

## I.



I HOPE, what has been offered briefly to prove the validity of the writings of the *New Testament*, is sufficient to establish and confirm my reader in the high esteem he has always had for those sacred records of our most holy faith.

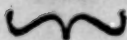


## CHAP. V.

### GENERAL EXPECTATION of the MESSIAH.

- I. *THE jewish expectation of a great and temporal deliverer, about the time of CHRIST's appearance in Judea.* II. *The samaritan expectation of the coming of CHRIST.* III. *Of the heathen expectation.* IV. *Character of the jews and heathens.*

**T**HERE is not any thing more certain, than that there was, about the time of our LORD's miraculous assumption of our nature, and his public appearance in *Judea*, a general expectation, among all people, of the rise of some great and extraordinary person.



*THE jewish expectations of a great temporal deliverer about the time of CHRIST'S appearance in Judea.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the notions and ideas the prophets among the jews had entertained and published concerning the coming of our Lord, both as related to his low and mean state on earth, and his spiritual kingdom over the whole world; yet nothing is more notorious than that the jews did expect about the time of our Lord's miraculous assumption of the human nature, a temporal prince to rise up among them, who should shake off the roman yoke, and victoriously subdue all nations to his government.

AND this general expectation of the jews, John i. 19 we find recorded by St. *John*. “ The jews  
*etc.* “ sent priests and levites from Jerusalem,  
 “ to ask him, [*John the Baptist*] Who art  
 “ thou? And he confessed, — I am not  
 “ the Christ. And they which were sent,  
 “ were of the pharisees.” In St. *Luke* we  
 find

find this record of the general expectation of Christ by all people, in these words: CHAP. V.

“ And as the people were in expectation,  
 “ and all men MUSED in their hearts of Luke iii.  
 “ John, whether he were the Christ or 15.  
 “ not.” They having heard the preaching  
 of *John*, and knowing the innocency of his  
 life, and being in great expectation of a  
 powerful and victorious prince, at this time,  
 who should be a restorer of their civil pow-  
 er and kingdom, and a subduer of all the  
 nations about them, questioned whether  
*John* might not be the very person. See  
 also *Luke* ii. 25, 26. where it is related, that  
*Simeon* expected to see Christ before his  
 death.

*HEROD* the great, expected the ap-  
 pearance of an extraordinary person, who  
 should obtain the government of the jews.  
 This is evident, from the cruelty he was *Matth. ii.*  
 guilty of in slaying the infants of *Betlehem* 16.  
 from two years old and under. This he did  
 to secure the possession in his family.

*HEROD* the tetrarch was of the same  
 opinion concerning the advent of Christ.



**PART I.** He seemed to look upon *John* the baptist to be the man, the jews had long expected. *Herod* had put *John* to death for speaking against his marriage of *Herodias*, his brother *Philip*'s wife, *Philip* being then alive. *JESUS* upon the death of *John* began to preach the gospel, and to work mi-

Matth. xiii. 58. racles. "And he did many mighty works, "because of their unbelief." The fame of the doctrine and mighty works of our Lord, reaching *Herod*'s ears, he says to those who

—xiv. 2. were with him, "This is *John* the baptist, "he is risen from the dead, and therefore "mighty works do shew forth themselves "in him." It is certain, that *Herod* was conscious, that the deliverer the jews expected, was born, which made him suspect that *John* the baptist was the person.

John vi. 5, &c.

THE common people, when they saw, that our Lord had fed five thousand of them with five loaves and two fishes, immediately conclude, that he was that person they expected should come into the world, and thereupon endeavour to make him a king. At another time, we find a great multitude of people attending our Lord to *Jerusalem*, and

and making loud acclamations before him, CHAP.  
crying out, "Hosannah to the Son of Da- V.  
vid, blessed is he that cometh in the name  
"of the Lord, hosannah in the highest." Matth. xxi,  
8, 9.

Thus they treated Christ as a temporal prince, and were always expecting that he would signify to them that he was the person, who was to restore the kingdom to *Israel*. But further, St. *John* relating this journey, says, that the people gave him the title of king, saying, "Hosannah, blessed  
"is the KING OF ISRAEL, that cometh in  
"the name of the Lord." And no doubt the multitude was convinced by the many miracles wrought by our Lord, especially that of *Lazarus*, that he was the very person who was capable of restoring them to their pristine rights and privileges of rule and government. This we learn from the dispute among the pharisees, they said one among another, "Perceive ye how we prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after  
"him." The multitude, many of them, were eye-witnesses of that stupendous miracle wrought by our Lord on *Lazarus*. *Lazarus* they knew had been dead four days, before he was restored to life by Christ. It is not

PART I. absurd to suppose, the people might expect, that if they were led on by Christ to destroy the roman power, and many of them in the attack should lose their lives, yet this mighty man was able to restore even that to them, and they might be certain he would do so. An accomplishment in a general very surprizing! A fit person, they thought, to be king of *Israel*, whose very word was able to raise his dead subjects to life. Victory and success, they concluded, must unavoidably attend so glorious a champion. Especially, if to this be added, the natural deductions this multitude, upon another miracle of our Lord, may be supposed to have made. I mean, from his feeding five thousand with so diminutive a quantity of food, five loaves and two fishes, and the taking up twelve baskets of fragments. This led them to conclude, that when they engaged in battle against either the *Romans* or other nations, under the command of this their king, they should never want for provision. These miracles caused many thousands to follow our Lord. And undoubtedly they expected some time or other, that he would be their leader, and  
give

give unto them the word of command. For CHAP.  
which they continually attended him. V.

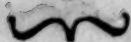
THE pharisees themselves, reflecting upon the many miracles wrought by Christ, are induced to question whether our Lord was not the temporal prince they expected should arise from among them. And here-upon, they ask him, [Christ] to shew them a sign, “ Master, *say they*, we would see Matth. xii, “ a sign from thee.” *i. e.* We have seen you, 38. Jesus of Nazareth, work many miracles and wonders among the people, by which we perceive you are a person highly favoured of God; but will you give us one sign whereby we may know that you are the Man, by whose means we shall be freed from the roman yoke, and through whose mighty deeds the royalty of *Israel* shall govern all the nations of the earth. If you will give us such a sign, then we will follow thee, we will receive you as our king, and as the Messiah, our fathers prophesied of, and whom we have long expected should at this time appear among us. And we desire, that this sign may be a very extraordinary one, immediately from heaven, and we will believe that you are our king.

FROM



## PART

## I.



FROM what has been offered, it fully appears, that the jewish people had very general expectations of the coming of a Saviour to rescue them from the roman power, and that the idea they had of him was that of a mighty, and victorious, temporal prince.

WHAT led them into this false and absurd notion of the Messiah, is not easy to be accounted for. *Moses* did not tell them, that the prophet who should arise among them, should be a great, temporal, and victorious prince; he intimates, that this prophet should be a great spiritual prince; for he says, that *unto him the people shall hearken*: not unto him the people shall be slaves. Which the jews expected would be the case of the heathens in the days of the Messiah. Indeed the very position of *Moses's* words, shew that Christ was to be a spiritual prince. They follow the rehearsal of the ritual temporal law. And thereby plainly suggest, that the then law which he [*Moses*] gave them, was to be set aside by the doctrine and preaching of a prophet to arise in future time. The word prophet, likewise, is a plain indication,

indication, that the weapons to be used by the preacher of this doctrine, were to be spiritual. Therefore, if Christ had assumed the character of king and victor, he would not have answered the character *Moses* had given of him. If a prophet pretends to force men to receive his doctrine: he consequently, forfeits the title of prophet, and thereby lays claim to no better title, than that of a conqueror and absolute monarch. The place and office of a prophet, is to argue, to persuade, and to instill into men just sentiments and ideas of things: which just ideas cannot be instilled into men by force and arbitrary power. Therefore, it follows, that the jews have mistaken the true sense of *Moses's* words. If they had took *Moses* for their rule, in receiving Christ, they must have believed in him; for Christ exactly answers the character *Moses* has given him. He preached to men, he endeavoured to instill into them good principles: and thereby laid a just claim to the title of prophet, which *Moses* had given him.

NOR could this false notion of theirs be grounded on the prophecy of *Jacob*: “The Gen. xlix.  
“ sceptre <sup>10.</sup>

PART “sceptre shall not depart from Judah, un-  
 I. “til Shiloh come, and unto him shall the  
 “gathering of the people be.” The pa-  
 triarch says, that the people should gather  
 themselves together unto Shiloh. By *the ga-  
 thering of the people*, it is plain, is to be un-  
 derstood, that the people would voluntarily  
 receive Shiloh. If Shiloh had, when he ap-  
 peared, by force of arms (as the jews at  
 the time of Christ expected) compelled all  
 the heathens to have been obedient to his  
 law, and subject to jewish rule, then he would  
 not have been the Shiloh, *Jacob* here pro-  
 phesies of; because if Shiloh had compelled  
 the people to obey him, it could not be said,  
 that *unto him the gathering of the people shall  
 be*. Which *gathering of the people*, must be  
 understood to be a voluntary act. Had the  
 jews therefore paid a due regard to this pro-  
 phesy, they would have found, that Christ  
 answered the character given of him by *Ja-  
 cob*. He preached his sublime doctrine, and  
 the people flocked into his faith and received  
 his law. Thus unto Shiloh *the gathering of  
 the people*, is actually accomplished, and  
 leaves the jews in a state of opposition to  
 their own prophecy. To which, if they had  
 paid

paid a due regard, they must have received CHAP.  
V.  
Christ.



AGAIN, the jews could not justly ground their idea of a temporal prince upon any prophecy of their prophets. To mention one passage out of *Isaiab*: “ And there Isa. xi. 1,  
&c.  
“ shall come forth a rod out of the stem  
“ of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out  
“ of his roots. He shall not judge after  
“ the sight of his eyes, neither reprove af-  
“ ter the hearing of his ears. But with  
“ righteousness shall he judge the poor,  
“ and reprove with equity: and he shall  
“ smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
“ and with the breath of his lips shall he  
“ slay the wicked.” The conduct of the person here described, was to be spiritual, *He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth*, i. e. he shall preach to the inhabitants of the whole world such a doctrine, which would, through its own internal power and efficacy in a spiritual sense, *smite the earth*, that is, in a spiritual sense, it would oblige men to imbibe his principles and to become his disciples. *The rod of his mouth*, i. e. he shall establish his law and  
government



PART government (which shall be spiritual) by  
 I. argument and persuasion, by appeal to the  
 reasons of men. For the prophet says, *with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked*, i. e. the obligations he shall make use of to compel all people to receive his doctrine, and to punish those who rejected it, would be spiritual, attendant and future rewards and punishments shall be denounced by him: the one will comfort the believer, the other torment the infidel and impenitent. It is therefore plain, that the jurisdiction here ascribed to the BRANCH is to be understood to be a spiritual jurisdiction. The weapons that were to gain this jurisdiction were to be spiritual, weapons of argument and persuasion. Had Christ used the rod of his arm, instead of the *rod of his mouth*; that is, had he instead of persuading, compelled men to receive his doctrine, he would in no sense have answered the character prophetically given of him by *Isaiah*. The prophecy would not have met its completion in Christ. But as he did use the *rod of his mouth*, and not the rod of his arm; that is, as he did instead of forcing, persuade men to receive his doctrine: so this prophecy is exactly, literally,

literally, and obviously fulfilled in HIM, CHAP. V.  
and in no other person whatever. The jews  
therefore expecting a temporal prince, ex-  
pected a person of a character their prophets  
had not foretold. Had they rightly con-  
sidered this passage of *Isaiab*, they would  
have perceived, that the Messiah was to  
have been (what HE really was) a spiritual  
prince: and, consequently, would have  
found themselves obliged (as far as the proof  
from prophecy goes) to have received him  
as such.

Thus it appears, 1. That the jews, at the  
time of Christ, had entertained a base and  
an unworthy idea of the Messiah, viz. that  
he would appear a great, temporal and  
victorious prince. 2. That they were not  
countenanced in this opinion by their pro-  
phets. But on the contrary, 3. That they  
direct them, in the strongest prophetic ex-  
pressions, to expect a spiritual Messiah.

BUT if there be any way to account for  
this expectation of a temporal Messiah, in-  
stead of a spiritual Messiah, I think it may  
be this: 1. That prophecy had ceased among  
the

PART the jews, at the time of Christ, near four

I. hundred years. 2. That the chief priests, scribes and pharisees did actually put a different construction upon the prophecies of the prophets relating to the Messiah, than what their literal, plain, and obvious sense would have led them to. And that they did this, is plain from the matter of fact itself. They are charged by our Saviour, as having by their traditions perverted the intentions of *Moses's* law, *Matth. xv. 6.* And it is easy to conceive, that they would, and did do the same by the writings of the prophets, especially those passages relating to the Messiah. 3. That they were at that time a most wicked people, immersed in carnality, and besotted to their vices, particularly the vice of ambition; for they thirsted for the government of the whole world: they were polygamists, adulterers, fornicators, &c. Upon these accounts, it may be presumed, the jews were led to expect a temporal prince. And as this is the character they justly sustain in the sacred writings, it does follow, that they were very unfit to expect a spiritual Messiah, all (except a very few) being utterly strangers to spirituality.

SECT.

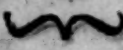


## SECT. II.

THE *samaritan* expectation of the coming of  
CHRIST.

ST. *John*, in the fourth chapter of his gospel, records a dialogue which passed between a woman of *Sychar* in *Samaria*, and our Lord. Wherein Christ having told her some particulars of her life and manners, and having endeavoured to instill into her mind noble and generous ideas available to the attainment of the glorious principle of universal love, she says unto him, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee, am he. The woman went her way into the city, and saith, Come, see a man which hath told me all things that ever I did, Is not this the CHRIST?" *i. e.* Is not this the great Prophet whom we now universally expect should come? and of whom we have of late so much discoursed. The people of the city, full of the expectation of the appearance



PART I.  ance of the Messiah, go forth to Jesus, conducted by this woman, and when they heard the doctrines he preached, they said to the woman, “ Now we believe, not because of thy saying : for we have heard him ourselves, and know, that this is indeed the CHRIST, the Saviour of the world.”

FROM this instance, we have a proof, that the *Samaritans* generally expected the appearance of some extraordinary person. They were not to seek for his name; for we find they stile him the MESSIAS, the CHRIST, the SAVIOUR of the world; appellations given to him long before his assumption of the human nature. I make one remark, The *Samaritans* had a more generous and worthy idea of the Messiah, than the jewish people, they upon hearing his doctrine say : “ Now we believe— “ that this is INDEED THE CHRIST, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.” The jews had no such glorious expectation of the Messiah, they represent him as the Saviour of themselves only; but these *Samaritans* justly stile him *the Saviour of the world*. Nor did they deliver this their opinion inconsiderately:

siderately : “ For, *says St. John*, when CHAP.  
“ the Samaritans were come unto him, they V.  
“ besought him that he would tarry with  
“ them : and he abode there two days.”

In which time they had sufficient opportunity to consider and canvass his doctrine, and to see if he laid a just claim to the title of the Messiah. These men constantly, during this time, attended his doctrine, and were convinced [many of them] that his doctrine was true. This *St. John* affirms in these words :  
“ And many more believed, BECAUSE OF  
“ HIS OWN WORD.” After this, when Jesus had staid there two days, they deliver this as their mature and deliberate opinion concerning him : “ WE BELIEVE AND  
“ KNOW that this is indeed the Christ, the  
“ Saviour of the world.”

### SECT. III.

#### OF the heathen expectation.

THE heathens appear to have had some expectation of the coming of some great person, who should become the Lord or Governour of the universe.

## PART

## I.

THE main thing the heathens were offended at, was, the low and mean state of life, in which it pleased our Lord to appear on earth. *Celsus* writing against christianity, makes these things an objection to Christ: his words are, "The prophets [*Isaiab* and *David*, in particular] say, "that he who is to come is great, and a prince, the Lord of the earth, of all nations, and of armies. \* " Had Christ assumed the character of a temporal prince, and set himself up for an universal potentate, the heathens would certainly have received him.

AND it does appear from *Suetonius* (a) and *Tacitus* (b), that about the time of our Saviour's appearance, there was a notion spread all over the east, that some person should arise out of *Judea*, who should obtain

\* Ὅτι μέγαν καὶ δυνάστην καὶ πάσης τῆς γῆς, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν καὶ στρατοπέδων κυρίον θάσιν οἱ προφηταὶ εἶναι τὸν ἐπιδημήσοντα. *Orig. cont. Cels. lib. 2. p. 78.*

(a) *Sueton. in vit. Vesp. cap. 4.*

(b) *Tacit. Hist. l. 5. c. 13.*

tain the empire of the whole world. The CHAP.  
*Chaldæan* fages are an instance of this gene- V.  
 ral expectation. It is recorded by St. *Mat-*  
*thew*: “ And behold, wise men came from Matth. ii.  
 “ the east, saying, Where is he that is born <sup>2.</sup>  
 “ king of the jews ? ” This shews, that  
 the *Chaldæans* expected that a mighty per-  
 son should arise out of *Judea*, and likewise,  
 that he should obtain the empire of the  
 world.

THIS general expectation among all the  
 heathen nations of the rise of an universal  
 monarch, sprung from the jews. The jew-  
 ish people universally boasted, that their  
 prophets had foretold, there should arise  
 up among them an extraordinary person,  
 who should deliver them from the roman  
 power, and make all the nations of the  
 earth his subjects. It is therefore no won-  
 der, that the heathens expected a temporal  
 Messiah, when the jews, from whom they  
 must receive this oral prophetic traditionary  
 expectation, had corrupted it, and thereby  
 made it to speak what their prophets never  
 designed.



## PART

## I.



I HAVE now demonstrated, that there was a general expectation of the Messiah, among all sorts of people, about the time of Christ's appearance in *Judea*. I have likewise shewn, what idea they had of him. I beg leave to subjoin, the following section, concerning the general corruption of the whole world at the time of Christ, in order more fully to shew, the necessity mankind lay under of a revelation from God.

## SECT. IV.

## CHARACTER of the jews and heathens.

I. THE jews were generally very corrupt and wicked at the time of Christ's public appearance in *Judea*. They seem to have been to a monstrous degree guilty of polygamy, as appears from this tradition,

Matth. v.  
31.

“ It has been said, whosoever shall put away  
“ his wife, let him give her a writing of  
“ divorcement.” This bill of divorce they  
gave upon the most trifling occasions : and  
sometimes, when the two persons agreed to  
leave one another, and be married to others.

For

For it does appear, from *Mark* x. 11, 12. that the jews both men and women, did at this time practice divorces: and afterwards married others. “ Whosoever, *says Christ*, “ shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. “ And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery. ” We have a very remarkable instance of this corrupt practice in the account the evangelist gives of *Herod* the tetrarch’s marriage with *Herodias*. This *Herod* the tetrarch had been married to the daughter of *Aretas*, king of *Petræa*, a considerable time, before he fell in love with *Herodias*, the wife of his brother *Philip*, and having seduced her from her husband, he then put away his lawful wife, *Aretas*’s daughter. *Herodias* had a daughter by her lawful husband *Philip*, whose name was *Salome*, and might be the very lady who entertained *Herod* the tetrarch with her dancing. Against this vile act of *Herod*’s *John* the baptist often spoke, and was by the means of *Herodias* his wife, thrown into prison, and afterwards beheaded. It is certain, that the example of these great per-

PART sons induced many to commit the like enormity. And this they did upon other ac-

I.  
~~~~~

counts than that of adultery, which our

Ver. 32. Lord pronounces was unlawful: "But I

"say unto you, that whosoever shall put

"away his wife, saving for the cause of for-

"nication, causeth her to commit adultery:

"and whosoever marrieth her, committeth

"adultery." And so general a corruption

was this: that we find the disciples express

their surprize and uneasiness at his prohibi-

tion of such wicked and licentious divorces;

Matth. xix. they say unto Christ, "If the case of the

10.

"man be so with his wife, it is not good to

"marry."

ANOTHER instance of their universal corruption, is that recorded in St. *John*, where

John viii.
4. &c.

he tell us, that the jews (especially the scribes and pharisees) brought unto Christ a wo-

man taken in adultery, in the very act: they

earnestly importune him to tell them, how

she ought to be punished. They had told

him, that according to *Moses's* law, she

should be stoned. He then fixes the method

of her punishment, and says to the jews thus:

"He that is without sin, let him cast the

"first

“ first stone at her. And they which heard C H A P.
 “ it, being convicted by their own con- V.
 “ science, went out one by one, beginning
 “ at the eldest even unto the last.” It is evi-
 dent from this passage, that all those men,
 who were then present, were guilty of crimes
 of the like nature with that this woman stood
 charged with by them. I should conclude,
 that they had been guilty of the very same
 fact: I judge our Saviour intended this, by
 saying, He that is without sin: *i. e.* He
 that has not been guilty of the self-same sin,
 let him, &c. because it relates to the act
 committed by the woman, and might be
 read: “ He that is without *this* (M) sin,
 “ let him, &c. For thus I translate the
 words: Ο ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν, *He that is with-*
out this sin. The whole passage, according
 to

(M) The addition of the word *THIS*, I judge, might
 have been made by our translators, with equal justice,
 in this place, with those additions of words they have
 made in divers passages of the writings of the *Old* and
New Testament. And, I am certain, this passage re-
 quires the addition, I contend for, as much as any
 other whatever. In *John* vii. 34. there are two words
 added by our translators which were not in the origi-
 nal copy: “ Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me*:
 “ and

PART to its true import signifies, that that person
 I. among the whole number then present, who
 was innocent, to whom the commission of
 the same crime might not justly be objected,
 let that innocent person cast the first
 stone. For the word *ἄμαρτος* does not
 signify here, that the person allowed by
 Christ to cast stones at the adulterous wo-
 man, must be without sin of any sort, but
 only not guilty of the same fact the woman
 stood accused of; *innocent* with respect to
 the sin of adultery. Which was the sin our
 Lord and the pharisees were then speaking
 of. And therefore the word must necessari-
 ly be understood, in a sense, strictly relating
 to the point in hand. Which is the sense I
 have put upon them. Therefore our tran-
 slation should read: "He that is without
 " this

" and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come. What
 " manner of saying is this that he said," &c. Again,
Luke xxiv. 30. the word *it* is added, "And it came
 " to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread,
 " and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them." And,
ver. 36. the word *be* is added: "Peace *be* unto you."
 In 2 *Chron.* xx. 32. these three words, *that which was*,
 are added: "And he walked in the way of Aša his fa-
 " ther, and departed not from it, doing *that which was*
 " right in the sight of the Lord."

“ this sin, let him cast the first stone at
 “ her (c) ”. i. e. let him who is innocent of
 the sin of adultery, cast, &c. And that
 this is the true sense and reading of this pas-
 sage, is farther plain from its context. “ And
 “ they which heard it, being convicted by
 “ their own conscience, Gr. *Οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαν-
 τες, καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς συνειδήσεως ἐλεγχόμενοι, And*
they which heard, were conscious to themselves
of their own guilt: or, Those which heard,
and being accused by their consciences of the
same sin, went out, &c. The unexpected
 decision which Christ gave, was a proof of
 his infinite knowledge; and struck them,
 for the present, with so great a confusion,
 that, St. John tells us, while Christ was
 stooping to the ground, the jews sneaked
 away, one after another, and left Jesus and
 the woman in the temple. He lifting him-
 self from the ground, and finding her alone,
 immediately dismissed the woman, and com-
 eth again to the pharisees, *ver. 12.*

THEIR inveterate hatred to our Lord is
 a plain indication of their vileness and dege-
 neracy.

(c) *Ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν, πρῶτος τὸν λίθον ἐπ’
 αὐτῇ βάλετω. Johan. c. viii. 7.*

PART neracy. Christ having cured a man of the
 I. palsy, in the presence of certain scribes,
Matth. ix. 2, 3. they being sensibly convicted,
 that it was really a miraculous performance ; and having nothing to object against the validity of the fact of which they were eye-witnesses, they proceed to asperse Jesus, and say : *This man blasphemeth.* Although they were sure the act performed was a real good, yet they endeavour to persuade the people, that the author of this miracle was a blasphemer. At another time, *Cb.* xii. 22, 24. Jesus having miraculously restored sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, and had cast out devils, the pharisees (a sect among the jews) hearing of these wonderful works ; not able to gainsay the credit of them, affirmed, and said of Christ : “ This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” And for this spiteful and malicious injustice of the jews, scribes and pharisees, we find this character given of them, *ver.* 34. “ O generation of vipers.” *Ver.* 39. “ A wicked and an adulterous generation.” And, *ver.* 41. the wickedness of this people is compared to the wickedness

wickedness of the men of *Nineveh*, with this exception, 'that the *Ninevites* repented of their sins at the preaching of *Jonas*, but they would not repent of their wickedness; altho' they had a greater person than *Jonas*, that preached repentance unto them. At another time our Lord charges the scribes and pharisees with hindering men from learning principles of truth, "Wo unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." And in the next verse, he charges these men, with devouring widows houses, and then proceeds to shew them how they had perverted truth: at *ver.* 33. their character is set down, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell." Notwithstanding Jesus was a most innocent man, preached a divine doctrine, and did good wherever he came; yet did the chief priests, scribes and pharisees, (though they had no just plea for it) often conspire against him, and sought means to put him to death. St. *John* tells us, that when Jesus was teaching in the temple, the jews took up stones to

Matt. xxiii.

13.

PART to cast at him, *Cb.* viii. 59. Certainly they
 I. designed to have stoned him to death, had
 not Jesus made his escape. And at another
 time they took up stones to stone him, *Cb.*
x. 31. The people of *Nazareth* “ filled
 “ with wrath, led him to the brow of the
 Luke iv. “ hill (whereon their city was built) that
 28, 29. “ they might cast him down head-long.”
 —xx. 20. At other times, “ they watched him, and
 “ sent forth spies, which should feign them-
 “ selves just men, that they might take
 “ hold of his words, that so they might de-
 “ liver him to the power and authority of
 “ the governor.” And when by the deceit
 of *Judas* they had taken Christ, another in-
 stance of their vileness appears, which is,
 that they suborned false witnesses that they
 might put him to death. When they had
 thus laid hold of Jesus, and falsely accused
 him, they stirred up the mobb to request
 of *Pilate*, that Jesus should be crucified, and
Barrabbas released. Upon which, *Pilate*
 gives this character of the chief priests and
 pharisees, “ He knew that for envy they
 “ had delivered him.” The mobb prevail-
 ed upon *Pilate*. And they crucified Jesus,
 a man of an unspotted character, who
 preached

preached the dictates of truth, and who did good always. This shews that the whole jewish nation were enemies to justice and holiness.

CHAP.
V.
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THERE was another epidemical sin among the jews at this time, viz. an ambitious pride. They thirsted for liberty, longed to shake off the roman yoke, and to become lords of the universe. This principle led them to be followers of Christ, in hopes he would some time declare himself the restorer of *Israel*. They were convinced he was capable of bringing to pass this their desired event, by the many miracles he had wrought, particularly that of raising *Lazarus*, and that of feeding the multitude in a miraculous manner with a small quantity of food. And as he did not assume the desired expected character, nor give them signs or promises of future liberty, at the time they treated him as a king, or temporal prince: (which was soon after his raising *Lazarus*, when he came from *Bethany* to *Jerusalem* to his last passover) it was a great disappointment to the vulgar, and raised in them a deep resentment to his person: which  
after-

PART afterwards being heightened and excited by  
 I. the chief priests, pharisees, sadducees, scribes  
 and elders, they cry out, not this man, but *Barabbas*. Thus the whole jewish nation imbrued their hands in innocent blood. And this act of theirs in crucifying Christ shews, that they were a most wicked, malicious, spiteful people.

2. THAT the heathens were universally wicked and superstitious, at the time of Christ, is a position my reader will readily allow. But however I add what follows.

The gentiles (for so the heathens were called at this time) were besotted to worldly cares, to the excess of apparel and dress, of eating and drinking, making these their chief care, and the attainment of them their ultimate aim. Upon which account our Lord tells his disciples, that they should take no thought for such things, “ saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink? or “ wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For “ after all these things do the gentiles “ seek..) ” This is the character our Lord gives of the heathens: and is as much as to say, The heathen people mind the cultivation

Matth. vi.  
31, 32.

tion and gratification of all parts and branches of vice and idolatry, and regard not the principles of truth. Again, the gentiles were the executioners of the jewish spite against Jesus, *Pilate* and the roman soldiers were all heathens, *Mark* x. 23, 34. xv. 16—22. Again, we find *Acts* xix. 24. that *Demetrius* and the craftsmen, persecute the apostles. They raise an uproar. The people of *Ephesus* appear incensed by *Demetrius*, full of wrath, cry out, Great is *Diana* of the *Ephesians*. And, if what this man saith in the foregoing verse be true: all the world worshipped the goddess *Diana*. And so fond were they of this their idolatry; that they, on this occasion for two hours, cried out, Great is *Diana* of the *Ephesians*. And it does appear from *ver.* 19. that the heathens were much addicted to magic, and such-like arts. *St. Paul*, *Acts* xvii. 22. gives this character of the *Athenians*, “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.” And the people and priests of *Lystra*, a city of *Lycaonia*, would have sacrificed oxen to *Barnabas* and *Paul*, but with great difficulty they dissuaded them from it, *Ch.* xiv. 13, &c. To conclude,



PART St. *Paul* gives a full character of the heathens in the first chapter of his epistle to the  
I. *Romans*: to which I refer the reader.

FROM this character of the whole world, it appears, that there was a real necessity on man's part, for a revelation of the will of God, in order to restore them to a due use of their reasons, to bring them to the perfect knowledge of God, and to everlasting salvation, for which they were at first created.



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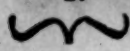
## CHAP. VI.

### The DIVINITY of CHRIST Asserted.

I. CERTAIN *persons* give CHRIST the title of GOD. II. CHRIST *lays claim to the title of GOD.*

**W**HEN a revelation of the will of God is expected (or said) to come immediately from God, it follows first of all, that the character and title of the Revealer be enquired into. And if upon enquiry it shall be found, that the Being delivering such revelation lays claim to celestial and eternal dignity, and gives sufficient convincing proof of his almighty and invincible power; we must conclude, that the Revealer is one of the sacred persons in the ever-blessed TRINITY. This upon examination will appear to be true

PART of the Revealer and revelation of the Go-

I. spel, viz. that it has God for its Author and immediate Revealer, and consequent of this is in the most absolute sense, an immediate revelation of the will of God.

SECT. I.

CERTAIN persons give CHRIST the title of GOD.

Matth. ii. 11. ST. *Matthew* tells us, that the eastern sages, when they were come unto Christ, fell down and worshipped him. It may be presumed, that these men believed, that Jesus was born after a miraculous manner, and concluded, that the Being so assuming nature, must be God as well as Man. It being an act supernatural, they fall down and worship Christ, and by this own his almighty Power and Godhead.

IT is very certain, that the leper looked upon Christ as a person in whom dwelt divinity, and had a power in himself to cure whom, and what distemper he pleases: he speaks to him in the same stile as though he was

was addressing himself to an invisible Being: CHAP.

“ Lord, *says he*, if thou wilt thou canst

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“ make me clean.” This word, Lord, we find the pharisee and the publican made use of in the temple, *Lord*, says the pharisee, *I fast twice a week, &c.* *Lord*, says the publican, *be merciful unto me a sinner.*

THE centurion at *Capernaum*, uses the same address, “ Lord, my servant lieth at Matt. viii.

“ home sick of the palsy.” And Jesus tel- <sup>6.</sup>

ling him, that he would come and heal him.

This centurion saith, “ Lord,— speak the

“ word only, and my servant shall [will, *it*

“ *should have been*] be healed.” Jesus then

perceived that the centurion had right ap-

prehensions of him, and that the title given

to him of God, was not a compliment on his

part, but a real persuasion; after telling

them that were with him, that he had not

found so great faith, no, not in *Israel*; he

said to the centurion, “ Go thy way, and

“ as thou hast believed, so be it done unto

“ thee.”

HIS disciples give him the same title, they being in a great storm upon a sea, do



PART not direct their eyes and prayers to heaven  
 I. for deliverance: but they come unto him,  
 and awake him out of sleep, and say unto  
 him, "Lord, save us, we perish." He  
 accepts the title as due unto him: and then  
 immediately grants them a calm. The ship-  
 men, or those who had the care of the ship,  
 were very much astonished, and said one to  
 another, "What manner of Man is this,  
 "that even the winds and the sea obey  
 "him." These words may be thus para-  
 phrased: We look upon this Jesus of Na-  
 zareth, the Son of Joseph, to be a mere  
 Man; but who is it, that can act after  
 this manner? Sure he is more than a  
 man, he has the power of God; for the  
 winds and the sea obey him. *Matth. xiv.*  
*33.* we read that many worshipped him,  
 saying, "Of a truth, thou art the Son of  
 "God." And the *Cananitisb* woman saith,  
 "Have mercy on me, O Lord." And a  
 second time, "Lord, help me." And a  
 third time, "Truth Lord."

CHRIST in conference with his own dis-  
 ciples, puts this question to them, "Whom  
 "do men say, that I the Son of Man am?"  
 They

They reply, "Some say, John the baptist, some Elias, or one of the prophets. But, *says Jesus to them*, whom say ye that I am? Thou art, *said Peter*, Christ, the Son of the living God." Which title he approves, and calls *Peter* blessed.

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SON of GOD, was a usual title given to him: Thus when Christ was crucified, the jews wagged their heads, and said, "Save thyself, if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." The chief priests and scribes, say, that *he saved others*, that is, he cured many that laboured under inveterate and incurable diseases, and raised persons from the dead; *but himself he cannot save*. He says, he is the Son of God, if he will now come down from the cross, we will believe his assertion. And with this title they mocked him. But the centurion and the band of soldiers with him, when they saw the earthquake, and the great darkness, and the mighty things that were done, they said, "Truly this was the Son of God."

## PART

## I.

MANY other instances might be added out of the other three evangelists to prove, that many of the people looked upon Christ as a divine Being ; but, I think, what has been said, is sufficient. I shall now add a few instances wherein Christ claims this character of God, as due to himself.

## SECT. II.

CHRIST *lays claim to the title of God.*

THE first I take notice of, is, that of St. *John* x. 30. where he asserts of himself, thus : “ I and the Father am one.” *i. e.* I am of the very self-same essence, as that God, whom ye say is in heaven : I am equal to the Father : I am the same essence as the Father : We are but One. Again, *ver.* 36. “ I am the Son of God.” Hereby bringing it a little nearer human understandings, I am of the same essence with the Father. *Cb.* xi. 4. He styles himself again, the Son of God : which expression signifies the

the sameness of essence with God the Father, CHAP.  
the first person, or distinction in the Trinity. VI.

THIS equality or sameness with the Father, he claims at another time, when conversing with his disciples, *Philip*, having heard him talk of the Father as his equal, saith unto him, “ Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been “ so long time with you, and yet hast thou “ not known me, Philip? He that hath “ seen me, hath seen the Father; and how “ sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, “ and the Father in me? ” Which words contain a full assertion that Christ is the Father: for thus he argues, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.* And why? *Because, the Father is in me, and I am in the Father. And we are one.*

I THINK, Christ's answer to *Philip*, is as though he said: *Philip*, I have been with thee a long time, you have seen me work many miracles, such as were never wrought before, and do many good works; you might have concluded that I was God: but



PART but it seems though I have given these proofs  
 I. of my divinity, you still do not know me:  
 I assure thee *Philip*, that he who hath seen and known me, hath seen and known the Father: And thou knowest that I have brought glad tidings unto men, I have published a dispensation that all may partake of, by which all who are in prison, may go free, and gain redemption: to this doctrine I have added several miracles, and done good where-ever I came, and now thou sayest, shew us the Father. There is no reason for this question, you have not made a due use of your Judgment. If you had, you would have known, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.

THIS sameness with the Father is in *John* viii. 19. thus expressed: “ Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.”

I JUST mention three particular facts, whereby Christ gave a full, sufficient, convincing proof of his almighty and invincible power, and thereby manifested himself to be God.

1. THE first is, that of his miraculous assumption of our nature. He took flesh of a pure virgin, who knew not a man, *Luke* i. 34. His generation was of the seed of the woman only, without the concurrence of a man, *Matth.* i. 18. This very act of our Lord's, as it was beyond the settled rules of nature, and therefore supernatural, demonstrates, that the Being so assuming humanity, is omnipotent, and really God.

2. THE resurrection of his own body. As this is a real truth, so it proclaims the transactor to be God. *Thomas*, one of the twelve, could not credit this stupendous instance of Christ's infinite power, although he himself was an eye-witness of the miracle *Jesus*, a short time before, had wrought on dead *Lazarus*. But when he had seen the holes made in his Master's hands, by the nails which nailed him to the cross, and the hole in his side, and put his hands into the wound, *Thomas* then owns the divinity of his Saviour, and cries out, "My LORD and my GOD." And no one, who

PART who fairly and candidly reflects upon this  
 I. surprizing instance of infinite power, can  
 with justice assert, that Christ was a mere  
 man. On the other hand, it is such an  
 evidence of his divinity, that it is in itself  
 a fact sufficient to prove this glorious article  
 of our faith, that GOD THE SON was  
 the very Being who descended from heaven,  
 assumed our nature, and preached to the  
 lapsed the glorious and comfortable tidings:  
 their immortality: their redemption, and  
 future admission into heaven.

3. HIS ascension into heaven. This is  
 the third great testimony Christ gave of his  
 almighty and invincible power. He has  
 hereby sufficiently demonstrated his eternal  
 godhead and infinite power.

THUS, briefly, I have asserted the divi-  
 nity of that BEING, who descended from  
 his empyreal throne, disrobed himself of  
 his glorious Majesty, and who has offered  
 unto me and to the whole world, the over-  
 ture and means of salvation.

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## C H A P. VII.

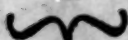
### The INTERNAL EXCELLENCE of the GOSPEL.

I. WORTHY ideas of GOD. II. *The principle of universal love and charity.* III. *The noble principle of seeking redemption.* IV. *Christ's arguments with men in order to establish principles of truth, wherein is plainly discovered the internal excellence of his doctrine.* V. *The gospel naturally tends to the perfection of our nature, and to our present and future happiness.* VI. *The gospel therefore lays claim to our assent and consent.*

**I** COME now to lay before my reader the internal excellence of the GOSPEL, and to shew from the natural and intrinsic tendency of its doctrines, that it must have GOD for its Author, that it tends to our present and future happiness  
and



PART and therefore lays a just claim to his assent  
 I. and consent.



I MAY affirm, that all the world before the birth of Christ, had lost the knowledge of God, and the means of salvation. And though some men had a few just and worthy apprehensions of a Deity; yet so blind and ignorant were the whole bulk of mankind, that the whole creation was buried in ignorance, idolatry, vice and superstition.

To rectify these mistaken notions, and to set men in a method to attain right thoughts of things, God the Son descended from heaven, assumed a body miraculously, and therein he endeavoured to teach us these three principles.

THE principles of christianity, are:

FIRST, Just and worthy apprehensions of the nature of the Divine Essence.

SECONDLY, Universal love and charity.

THIRDLY,

THIRDLY, A hearty and sincere desire of redemption out of this world, and admission into the glorious mansions of eternity.

THESE, I say, are the noble principles of christianity, the glorious doctrines of our proclaimer of redemption, the eternal God. Principles in themselves worthy of God to teach, and consequently, worthy of men, who are rational beings, to receive.

UNDER these three principles are contained all the lesser doctrines of the gospel, all the instructions of reason, and all the attainments which men are voluntarily to make in order to their ascension to the heavenly regions of eternal habitation.

SECT. I.

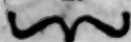
WORTHY *ideas* of GOD.

THE first principle is: The attainment of just and worthy apprehensions of the nature of the Divine Essence.

I HERE

## PART

## I.



I HERE suppose my reader convinced, that there is a God, and therefore needing no arguments to persuade him to the belief of that, of the truth of which he himself is a living evidence.

1. THE first idea we form of God, is, That he is a Being without beginning and without end: the ETERNAL ESSENCE.

2. THAT he is in himself, consummate perfection, perfect in holiness, perfect in power and perfect in knowledge.

3. THAT he is the creator of the angels, the creator of the heaven and the earth, he creator of man, and the author of all things, whether visible or invisible.

4. THAT he loveth all men without distinction of persons.

5. THAT he is the origin of all good.

WHATEVER thoughts or ideas of God, which contradict these just and worthy notions

tions of him, we have at any time imbibed, either from a misrepresentation of some places of scripture, or from vulgar and ignoble apprehensions of him; they are to be rejected as unworthy of rational beings to receive and retain.

OF this sort, are all those ideas which represent God as a permitter of evil; as a Being which suffers wickedness and wicked men to flourish and prosper, and grieve and oppress the righteous; all those which seem to insinuate that he was the author or origin of evil; those which would insinuate, that he might, if he would, hinder the sins and iniquities of men; and, therefore, is justly chargeable with standing neuter and permitting their wiles; those which represent him to us, as a Being that is wrathful, tyrannical, revengeful, and the like; those which feign, that he afflicts men with death, sickness, lameness; and all those which seem to say, that he maketh war and tumults, &c. And lastly, all those ideas which represent him as sending punishments and judgments, such as inundations of water, plagues, thunders, storms, &c. to destroy men.

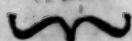
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ALL



## PART

## I.



ALL these ideas are repugnant to the very nature of God. And he who would be intitled to think rationally and justly of the Deity, must think of him in the manner set down in the five ideas above, and reject every thing that is repugnant thereto.

Is a man thoroughly persuaded, that God is the origin of good, then the notion that he is also the origin of evil will be found to be contrary to this apprehension of him. If the one be true, the other must be false. For it is certain truth, that he who is in himself the consummate good, cannot also be in himself the consummate evil. Evil therefore must have its origin from some other cause. If it be impossible to find out the origin of evil, yet it is certain, God was not the author of it: for he is a Being who is perfect in goodness, in power, and in wisdom. Which we might easily perceive by the works he hath created, which are visible to us: according to the arguing of

Rom. i. 8. *St. Paul*, " For the invisible things of him  
 " from the creation of the world are clearly  
 " seen, being understood by the things  
 " that

“ that are made, even his eternal power CHAP.  
“ and Godhead.” The order, beauty and VII.  
perfection of all the works of creation demonstrates its Author a perfect Being. As he is perfect, then that he is a permitter of evil, much more the author of it, must vanish as a notion absurd and ridiculous, unworthy of an infinite beneficent Being, and withal repugnant to the dictates of our reasons.

As for the disorders, wars, and tumults which happen between the powers of this world, whereby men are oppressed in trade and traffick, or whereby they lose their lives; these things have not God for their author: but are the natural off-spring of pride and ambition, fury, revenge, spite, malice, money and politicks.

AND as for the many diseases, misfortunes and calamities, the deaths of friends and relations, the constant attendants of society; these have not Him for their author, but are the natural consequences of our sins and iniquities, and our deaths are occasioned either by vicious habits, or the decayedness

PART of our bodies, whereby the separation of our  
I. souls is made.

As for plagues, inundations, famines, &c. these are the natural off-spring of the place we inhabit; and not chargeable upon that God, whose glorious attribute is: that he delighteth not in the miseries of men.

UPON the preaching of christianity it appeared, that this was a true and just opinion, That God being without beginning and without end, was in himself a spiritual Being; and that the worship due unto him was a spiritual worship. And what is such a worship, but just and worthy apprehensions of him, founded in the souls of men, by just conclusions attainable by their spiritual powers. It follows then, that those only are the true worshippers of God, who endeavour to attain just and worthy ideas of him, or having attained such ideas, do, by virtue of this their principle of truth, repel and detest all ideas which are absurd and repugnant thereto, and who daily grow in full and sure persuasion that such their ideas are truth.

AGREEABLY

AGREEABLY hereto, he will conclude, that the redemption of mankind, is an act worthy of God; especially when he finds it included in the general idea of God, we have just now laid down, namely, that he is the author and origin of all good.

THIS will still lead him farther to apprehend, that the terms of redemption are offered to all without exception; and so he will discover, that God neither predestinates nor reprobates men, some to heaven, and others to hell. This is, he finds, expressed in the fourth general idea of the divine Essence. Where it is said, That God loveth all without distinction. And from this idea he will find that the gospel, as it proposes the general redemption of all without exception, is worthy of God, as its Author, and worthy our belief, because not partial.

IT will therefore be necessary for a man who pretends to worship God, to receive these ideas concerning him. It is in vain to say, there is a God, without we worship him in spirit and truth. In spirit, *i. e.* we



PART must ingraft worthy ideas of him in our souls,  
 I. as principles immutable. In truth, *i. e.* that  
 we are certain that such our apprehensions  
 of him are true.

THIS is the first principle of christianity, and is attainable by a due use of our rational faculties; it is the only worship due unto God. And whoever ascribes any of these perfections to man, makes him an idol, runs counter to those noble apprehensions he has imbibed, and stands self-condemned.

IF a man holds any the minutest opinion derogatory of God, his holding these apprehensions in conjunction with that, renders his worship of God idle and vain. For no one can hold God to be just and good, and at the same time, to be severe and tyrannical.

HE will, if he duly and justly considers, look upon God, as an eternal, omnipotent Being, as the chief Good, from whom all goodness and perfection flows: as the Author and continual Preserver of all created powers

powers and things, visible and invisible: CHAP.  
and, consequently, as the common parent VII.  
of all men; as the origin of all good, the  
fountain of happiness, and giver of consummate bliss; as the Author and Proclaimer of salvation to us the lapsed and degenerate; in which glorious dispensation of his incomprehensible beneficence, he has most graciously and most mercifully instructed us in the path which, if trod, will bring all the sons of disobedience to celestial bliss and restoration. These are ideas and apprehensions worthy of God. And he who sincerely and permanently imbibes them, worships God in spirit and truth.

SECT. II.

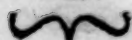
*THE principle of universal love and charity.*

THE second great principle of christian doctrine, is: An universal love and charity towards all men.

IN this principle are included all obligations due from one man to another. The principal are:

## PART

## I.



1. JUSTICE, which is the very band of society : an upright and just way of action. For universal love is compounded of justice. If love could cease to be attended with this endowment, it must cease to be love: for in what sense can men be said to love one another, if they neglect to perform the common rule of justice which is due from the one to the other, as they are members of society.

2. THIS principle displays itself in the regard one man ought to have to the temporal benefit and welfare of his neighbour. If he loves him, as himself, then he will not at any time seek to impair, hazard, or endanger his life ; but seek all methods that shall tend to the support of his well-being. And though this, in the present times of degeneracy, is a very hard and difficult task to be performed, according to those rules, which a well-informed reason would dictate; yet the person who seeks redemption, and has entertained such just and worthy apprehensions of God, as are instanced in above, will endeavour, according to the now circumstances of things,  
time

time and place, to benefit his neighbour as himself. At least, his soul must sincerely with all mankind health and happiness, and if opportunity serves, never fail to let this principle appear in action.

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3. THE last I mention, is : A hearty, sincere desire, which ought to be among all persons, that all men may form just and right apprehensions of God, that they may lay hold of the terms of redemption, and all gain a final admission into the mansions of eternity; subjoining to this, that all men have an equal right to the privileges, which God the Word, when incarnate, preached and proclaimed unto us.

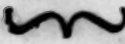
THOSE things which are repugnant to this fundamental principle, and tends to destroy the universal love we are speaking of, will carefully be avoided by such who aim at the social happiness of themselves, and all their fellow-creatures. In this principle of love are contained all moral virtues : chastity, temperance, almsgiving, &c. and whatsoever is commendable and praise-worthy.

THE



## PART

## I.

 THE adulterer and the adulteress, the incontinent and the lascivious, are persons which have no share in this principle ; they destroy the universal harmony, love and concord, which are the natural results of a due observance of this noble and truly generous principle. The drunkard and glutton, the gamester and fop, are persons who are so many enemies to peace and good order, and therefore can lay no claim to the principle of universal charity and benevolence ; for peace and good order, true friendship and perfect amity, are the happy consequences and glorious attendants of this principle : all which they endeavour to destroy by their vices, iniquities and immoralities. The backbiter and tattler, the proud and envious, are persons that have renounced this rational principle, and who by their behaviour and practice proclaim themselves the authors of confusion, variance, discord, envy and inveterate hatred. The usurer and extortioner, the oppressor and cheat, are pests of society, and are so far degenerate, and so averse to the instructions of this principle, that they are in

in a proper sense, cannibals. In short, no man can be a true friend to society, but he who imbibes this principle of universal benevolence. A man may boast of heroic deeds, which he has done for the benefit and honour of the kingdom, or city, of which he is a member; but, in vain is it, whilst he takes all measures to debauch and corrupt the morals of the society.

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THE open, daring (and by their wealth and station, potent) enemies to this principle are all encouragers of vice and immorality; the formers and protectors of all lasciviousness, viz. plays, opera's, masquerades, &c. The wicked patriot of his country, is so far from being a friend to this principle, or a lover of mankind, that he is an open and avowed enemy to society. The authors and venders of plays, obscene ditties, ballads, courtship and gallantry, are so many persons who employ their money, parts, wit and memory in opposing and ridiculing this fundamental principle of true and sincere christianity. For all things which tend to corrupt and debauch the minds of men, render them vicious, and so

PART so tend to enervate and destroy the universal love, harmony and concord which ought to govern the society.

I.

THE friends to this principle are of a quite different character: they will endeavour to shew their love to all men, by their chastity, temperance and virtue, by acts of justice and fair-dealing, and by succouring, aiding and benefiting the society, (mankind in general,) and by all other acts of true kindness and benevolence,

### SECT. III.

*THE noble principle of seeking redemption.*

THE third and last grand principle of christian doctrine is: A hearty and sincere desire of redemption out of this world, and admission into the glorious mansions of eternity.

THIS, as it is the equal right of all without exception, so ought it to be the endeavour of all to attain unto. The happy consequences of this principle will be,

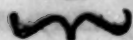
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I. A FREEDOM from carnality. He whose mind is taken up solely with the thoughts of sense, and pursues the dictates of a corrupt imagination, cannot wish that he may be admitted into heaven. Nay, if he could wish it, yet his wish must be vain, because his soul is not fit for a celestial flight, whose thoughts and affections are set upon sordid and ignoble pleasures. It must be confessed, that there are certain pleasures which are in themselves innocent and lawful. As the chaste junction of the conjugate, the civil conversation of friends, and harmless recreations. But when these sensualize the soul, and become excesses, they retard its heavenly aspiration, and peg it down to the earth. On the other hand, he whose mind looketh for and expecteth redemption, and seeks it as his ultimate good, the ideas of sense and imagination must have their proper post, and not hinder and retard the glorious ideas of his reason, whose purity and perfection will always be the aim of that man whose design is the redemption of his soul out of this place, and admission into the glorious mansions of eternity. A man of this principle



PART

III.



principle will not make his pleasures and sensations the sole delight of his mind, but use them with prudence, discretion and moderation, governing them, and not being governed by them. Hence he will never suffer his passions to usurp the place and authority of his reason. So he will not become a slave to himself, and his vices, but instead, voluntarily embrace virtue and holiness; as actions worthy of a rational being.

AGAIN, in vain, will the carnal sensual man lay claim to this principle; for a man who will not lay aside his pleasures upon free choice in order to gain redemption, comes not rightly into the means of salvation. He must chuse the ways of peace and truth for their own intrinsic worth, and he must imbibe these principles as his own. Otherwise, if he receives them through dread or fear, either of avoiding present punishment, or future penalty, they will not be available to salvation. On the other hand, the man who seeks redemption, and lays hold of the overtures of salvation, listens to the pure and unbiaſſed dictates of his ſpiritual being, acts uprightly by choice in all things agreeable

to

to the principles of christianity, avoids every thing that tends to vitiate his mind, whether it be profane history, or disingenuous speculation, spends his time rationally, and takes no lasting pleasure and comfort in any thing, but in the thoughts of a happy redemption out of prison, and a glorious restoration to the habitation of bliss and perfection.

2. AN endeavour after the most just and equitable notions of the benefits accruing to us by means of the gospel of redemption. In this search the man who is governed by his reason, will take special care to avoid imbibing any notion that is contrary to true and just apprehensions of the nature of the divine Essence. The whole tenour of the gospel declaration, may be summed up in these few words: The certainty of the immortality of the soul: The certainty of its future resurrection: The certainty that every one who purifies himself shall ascend into heaven. These are the glorious doctrines of the evangelical dispensation. Privileges and ideas in themselves worthy of belief, not only because they are the declarations of God himself; but also because they are suited

PART ed to the very nature of our beings, and to  
I. the unhappy case we are in.

Thus, I have laid before my reader the three fundamental principles of truth and christianity. The internal excellency of them, I have already in a measure, shewn: their natural and intrinsic tendency to make men happy here and hereafter I have in part proved, and that these principles lay just claim to our sincere reception, I have briefly hinted. In the remaining part of this chapter I proceed to shew, that the ideas and principles laid down in these three sections, are the very ideas and principles that Christ taught. This I shall do by a citation of divers passages or sayings, which the evangelists (particularly St. *Matthew*) have recorded, that they received from Christ's own mouth. In doing this, the internal excellency of the Gospel will fully appear; whose lustre and glory shines like the sun, is for the common good and salvation of all men from the one end of the earth to the other; tends to our present and future perfection, and therefore claims our belief and sincere reception.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

*CHRIST's arguments with men in order to establish principles of truth, wherein is plainly discovered the internal excellence of his doctrine.*

ST. *Matthew* says, that when our Lord began the public declaration of his will, he ushered it in with these words: “ Re-<sup>Matth. iv.</sup>  
pent, for the kingdom of heaven is at  
“ hand.” That is, the subject of his first  
arguings with men, were subjects of repentance. The whole world, both jews and gentiles, were grossly vicious. The jews, though not idolaters, yet were great sinners; and such generally entertain unworthy notions of the nature of God. Idolaters, if morally good, which is, I think, a thing impossible; because idolatry itself, I presume, is an immoral act, cannot be supposed to entertain worthy ideas of God. Nay, it is evident, that the whole world, at the coming of Christ, had entertained unworthy apprehensions of God: the jews thought that God would subdue all nations

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to



PART to their government, and that he was the

I. God of them only. The heathens looked upon the invisible Deity, as a friend and patriot to the jews, and paid adoration to stocks and stones. Such unworthy ideas had all mankind of the nature of the divine Essence.

THEREFORE from these words, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*: we may conclude, that Christ argued with the jews after this manner: You have hitherto apprehended that God is a respecter of persons, and that he regardeth no people under the heavens but you *Israelites*: you suppose that your sacrifices of bulls and of goats, your solemn feasts and new-moons, your observation of times and seasons, your washings, purifications and cleansings, are available in the sight of God to procure you remission of sin. From these mistaken notions, you hate all those people that do not perform the rites and ceremonies of your religion. You judge them as abhorred by God. Think not that he delighteth in your sacrifices, in your burning of incense, or in any external act of your ceremonial law. The nature

nature of the divine Essence is spiritual: CHAP.  
therefore he cannot delight in the blood of VII.  
bulls and of goats, it is repugnant to true  
and worthy ideas of the Creator of the uni-  
verse, to judge, that he will be appeased by  
your bloody sacrifices, your new-moons,  
and your sabbaths. God is a Spirit, and  
the worship due unto him is a spiritual wor-  
ship, the attainment of such ideas as are  
worthy of him, founded and established in  
your spirits, by a due use of their faculties,  
as principles ingrafted within you, able to  
withstand and expell all those absurd notions  
of God; the darkness the whole world la-  
bours under, and which men in all ages of  
it will broach and advance. You might  
perceive that your present ideas are unwor-  
thy apprehensions of the nature of the divine  
Being; for, behold, you ascribe to Him  
the creation of the world, the creation of  
the first man and the first woman, from  
whom ye all have sprung. So that God  
gave all one father. And does not he now  
cause the rain to descend upon all the na-  
tions of the earth, and the sun to shine equal-  
ly upon jew and gentile. Doth not the earth  
bring forth fruit for them as well as for you.

PART Hath he not declared by this his way of  
I. action, that he is the common parent and  
supporter of all men, of the gentiles as well  
as of you jews? Return therefore from  
these your unworthy thoughts of him, and  
look upon God as the common Father of  
you all. The time is now present wherein  
the gentiles shall worship God in spirit and  
truth, they shall return from their ignorance  
and false notions concerning him, to the  
knowledge, and to the attainment of just  
and worthy apprehensions of him. They  
are equally entitled with you to the gospel  
of the kingdom. For this I declare unto  
you, that that person, be he jew or gentile,  
who repents of his former superstition, and  
through a due use of his reason, imbibes  
just and worthy ideas of God, and loves all  
men, and looks for and seeks redemption,  
and to this adds purity of life and action, he  
shall see God, he shall be admitted into hea-  
ven. And of this you might easily be con-  
vinced by an appeal to your reasons. But  
for the good of mankind, and in compassion  
to their present degeneracy in point of un-  
derstanding, I will work many miracles in  
defence of this doctrine, and thereby testify  
the truth of what I say. HIS

HIS arguing with the gentiles, in order to bring them to repentance, may be couch-  
ed as follows: You apprehend, that God, the invisible deity, is a respecter only of that small people, the children of *Israel*, your apprehension of him, that he is a hater of you, your worshipping images, the works of your own hands, your appointing days to the honour of your gods, your institution of their diabolical rites, your offering your children to them, and your degeneracy to fable, vice and superstition, are so many evidences, that you think unworthily of the invisible deity, and do make the least use of your reasons. If you did but reflect on the creation of the world, the descent of rain and prosperous seasons upon you gentiles as well as upon the jews; did you but observe that the same sun which nourisheth that small people, at the same time nourisheth and supporteth you, you might easily perceive, and from thence readily acknowledge, that God the invisible deity, is the common parent of all men, that he hath equal respect to jew and gentile without distinction of nations or persons. You have made to your-



PART selves idols, before whom ye have worshipped. To these deities you ascribe your victories in battle, your fruitful seasons, your peace and tranquility, and the guardianship and protection of your several countries, you build temples for them, and perform rites unto them. But how vain and irrational, how unworthy of men is this worship you pay unto them. These are the works of your own hands, cut out of wood or stone, bearing the representation of man or beast. But let me ask you this question, Can they hear, or can they see? Your answer must be, No. How derogatory therefore to the reasons of mankind is it to invoke such deities, as having the representation of ears, hear not; and of eyes, but see not, and in whose nostrils there is no life, nor in whom is there the least understanding. Certainly, to pass a true and right judgment upon idolaters, it must be this: They that make them, are like unto them, and so are all they who put their trust in them. And this comparison is a very just one; for who among you, that hears me at this time, if you argue with yourselves, can judge, that an image benefits you, when it cannot

not benefit itself. Does not it owe its existence from you? did not you fashion it out of a log of wood? and do not you preserve it from the inclemency of weather, by placing it in a temple? The very ornaments and perfections of it, you are the authors of; you continually clean and adorn it, you may be said to benefit it, but it cannot benefit you. For while it remains in the form of an idol it benefits no man. From hence it is plain, that you who have made these idols, who have worshipped and trusted in them, are as senseless stocks and stones without understanding. And the only difference between ye, is, that the idol when it falleth to the ground, the wood of it will serve for fire to warm ye; but ye when ye die, your bodies rot in the earth. Hearken now, O ye gentiles, to the words of truth; put away from you these idols, their abominable sacrifices and ceremonial rites, abolish your vicious customs, and return to worthy and just ideas and apprehensions of God; look upon him, as he really is, the common Father of you all; as the continual Preserver and Supporter of all men; and as the the only Being to whom ye ought to ascribe

PART all things that are perfect and good : for he  
 I. only is the consummate Good, perfect in  
 holiness, perfect in knowledge, and perfect  
 in power. To these worthy apprehensions  
 of the Divine Essence add: an universal love  
 towards all men, purity of life and action,  
 and an hearty desire of redemption out of  
 this world, and an admission into the king-  
 dom of heaven. That these are doctrines  
 and privileges worthy of God for their Au-  
 thor, your reasons might suggest unto you,  
 if you adhered to their pure unbiaſſed dic-  
 tates: but in compaſſion to your preſent de-  
 generacy in manners and underſtanding, and  
 as farther testimony and ocular conviction,  
 that the words I ſpeak of myſelf are in  
 themſelves true ; behold, I go forth among  
 you, and without the phyſician's ſkill I cure  
 the lame, the blind, the diſeaſed, the poſ-  
 ſeſſed, &c. and by this ye ſhall know, that  
 I am he whom ye ought to liſten unto, and  
 whoſe doctrine ye ought to receive.

I PRESUME, theſe and ſuch-like were  
 the arguments Chriſt made uſe of when he  
 began to declare his will unto mankind. His  
 goſpel he atteſted by miracles. *St. Matthew*  
 having

having related the affair of his preaching of CHAP.  
VII.  
repentance and proposing the gospel of the  
kingdom, or the kingdom of heaven to  
men, says, that "Jesus went about all Ga-  
lilee, healing all manner of sicknesses, and Matth. iv.  
23.

"diseases among the people." In another  
place, he tell us, that Jesus coming out of  
the country of the *Gergesenes*, and returning  
into his own city, afterwards "went about — viii.  
28.  
"all the cities and villages, teaching [*ar-*  
*guing*]

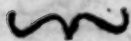
in the synagogues, preaching the  
"gospel of the kingdom, and healing every  
"sickness and every disease among the peo-  
"ple." This is the brief account he gives  
of these transactions of our Lord. Herein  
are contained, 1. The declaration of re-  
demption, the glad tidings of salvation.  
2. The means to attain it, implied in the  
word *teaching*. 3. His working of miracles.  
So that the evangelist in these few words, de-  
clares that Christ delivered the whole of  
christianity, which he styles, *the gospel of the  
kingdom*.

By the expression, *preaching the gospel of  
the kingdom*, I understand, that God the Word  
did then make a full declaration of his will.

Which



PART Which declaration I humbly conceive, might  
 I. be couched in some such words as these :



I DECLARE unto all men the glad tidings of redemption. It shall come to pass, that he who thinks worthily of God, and repents him of his former ignoble thoughts of him, and so worships him in spirit and in truth, lives in love and charity with all mankind, purifying himself, and seeks to attain salvation : he shall finally be saved, and be admitted into heaven.

THIS I take to be the sum of christian doctrine. In it is contained the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and its resurrection and redemption. Tidings worthy to be called the gospel of the kingdom, worthy of God for their proclaimer, and worthy of men to imbibe, as tending to the perfection of their Beings, both as it relates to the time which now is, and to that which is to come. In the one peace and happiness, in the other consummate bliss and eternity. For how comfortable is it to reflect, That our God hath offered to all mankind, without exception, the terms of redemption and restoration ;

restoration ; hereby declaring to us his parental care and concern for all, and that he is our common Benefactor, ratifying in this dispensation the character he bears in the act of creation, the Father of all mankind. That in order to our admission into heaven he requires, that we attain worthy ideas and apprehensions of him ; such as are agreeable to the purity of his Essence, the majesty of his Person, and the wisdom of his Nature, according to the most refined ideas we are capable to form concerning him, by a due attention of our rational powers ; that we love all men, endeavour to further their salvation, and to establish them in worthy thoughts of God ; and, that we seek salvation as the ultimate end of our actions. This then we must understand St. *Matthew* to mean, by *preaching the gospel of the kingdom*.

To establish them in this doctrine, he went, says St. *Matthew*, about all *Galilee* preaching it, testifying the truth of it, by working of miracles on all that were sick and diseased among the people in all the cities and towns in that region. Nay, it seems, that the same of these miracles, and the

PART the fame of him as a preacher of the gospel  
 I. of the kingdom, extended itself over a  
 neighbouring country: “ And his fame

Matth. iv.  
 24.

“ went out throughout all Syria, and they  
 “ brought unto him all sick people that  
 “ were taken with divers diseases, and tor-  
 “ ments, and those which were possessed  
 “ with devils, and those which were luna-  
 “ tick, and those that had the palsie; and  
 “ he healed them.” It is certain, those that  
 brought these sick had heard of the doctrines  
 he preached, and looked upon him for the  
 purity of his instructions, and the miracu-  
 lous cures he had performed in *Galilee*, as  
 having in himself the character of the divine  
 Being. His fame ran throughout all *Syria*.  
 And being persuaded some by ocular con-  
 viction, and others by the testimony of  
 these persons who were present in the towns  
 of *Galilee*, when Christ came preaching the  
 gospel of the kingdom, and working mi-  
 racles; stirred up their brethren the *Syrians*  
 to carry all their sick and diseased, inso-  
 much that they brought unto Christ all the  
 invalids that were in that region: *And he*  
*healed them.* These wonderful works oc-  
 casioned our Lord to be attended by a  
 vast

vast concourse of people, who were hearers of his declaration, and eye-witnesses of the cures here said to be wrought by him. "And there followed him great multitudes of people, from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." This is the history St. *Matthew* gives us of Christ's beginning to preach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven.

St. *Mark* says, that Jesus came into Galilee, and there preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, and said, "Repent ye and believe the gospel." The word *Gospel* is the name of the system of rules and doctrines which Christ preached, and signifies, *The tidings of peace and salvation*. This system of principles, St. *Mark* assures us, our Saviour preached in the synagogue at *Capernaum* on the sabbath: "And they were astonished at his doctrine." To shew the people publicly assembled that his words were true, he condescends to work a miracle in favour of it. "And there was in their synagogue a man who had an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying, 'Let



PART " Let us alone, what have we to do with

I.

~~~~~

" thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou

" come to destroy us? I know thee who

" thou art the holy One of God. And Je-

" sus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy

" peace, and come out of him. And the

" unclean spirit came out of him." And

then he relates the amaze the people were

in on the performance of this miracle, and

he particularly tells us, that they ascribed

it to the doctrine he taught, and to his own

Ver. 27. power and authority. " And they were all

" amazed, inasmuch that they questioned

" among themselves, saying, What thing

" is this? what new doctrine is this? for

" with authority commandeth he the un-

" clean spirits, and they do obey him."

It was the internal excellence of the gospel,

and its external evidence, that caused the

peoples questioning. And the fame of this

doctrine and miracles spread throughout all

the region round about *Galilee*. So great

was Christ's fame as the preacher of a good

doctrine, and a worker of miracles, that

Simon and they that were with him, say unto

Ver. 37. him, " All men seek for thee." And then

he takes an occasion to inform *Simon* and

his

his companions of the intention of his travels. “ And he said unto them, Let us go
“ into the next towns, that I may preach
“ there also : for therefore came I forth.”

CHAP.

VII.

Ver. 38.

FROM whence it plainly appears, that the principal design of our Lord was, to preach the glad tidings and means of salvation to as many as he conveniently could, and not to astonish mankind with the performance of miracles. He endeavoured to argue men into just and worthy apprehensions of the nature and perfections of the divine Essence, to instill into them principles of universal love and charity, to stir them up to seek the proper means of salvation, and to desire redemption. The miracles he wrought were certain proofs of his truth and veracity, and public evidences of the good tendency of his gospel. The excellency of his dispensation needed them not : but the vices and miseries of the human race, and the degeneracy of their reasons, rendered it necessary, that our Lord should work miracles to convince them that his words were true, and that he was that divine Person they and their forefathers had long expected.

It

PART It was, I say, Christ's chief design to preach
 I. the gospel. This was the opinion of *Mark*,
 for he first takes notice of Jesus's preaching,
 and then of his miracles: "And he preach-
 Ver. 39. " ed in their synagogues throughout all Ga-
 " lilee, and cast out devils."

HAVING now laid down the general method which Christ took to establish the gospel, viz. an appeal to the reasons of men by argument and persuasion: which peaceable and quiet method is an evidence of the internal excellency of christianity, shewn what is meant by preaching the kingdom of God, and what the gospel is: I proceed still farther to cite some other passages of the evangelists, which they have occasionally recorded in the course of their history, to demonstrate the internal excellence of the gospel.

ST. *John* gives us an account of Christ's conference with a samaritan woman at *Jacob's* well on mount *Gerizim*, whither she was come to draw water. The woman having perceived from divers foregoing passages of their discourse, that Christ was a prophet,

phet, says to him, " Our fathers worship-
" ped in this mountain, but ye say, [i. e.
" you jews say] that in Jerusalem is the
" place where men ought to worship. Je-
" sus saith unto her, Woman, believe me,
" the hour cometh when ye shall neither in
" this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem wor-
" ship the Father. The hour cometh, and
" now is, when the true worshippers shall
" worship the Father in spirit and in truth :
" for the Father seeketh such to worship
" him. God is a Spirit, and they that
" worship him, must worship him in spirit
" and in truth." I make a few observations
upon this passage.

I. THE woman here pleads for external worship : *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.* There stood a temple on this mountain, which was built by *Sanballath*, governour of *Samaria*, at the request of *Manasses* his son-in-law. It happened thus : *Manasses* contrary to the command of the mosaic law had married the daughter of an uncircumcised gentile. He was reprov'd for this at *Jerusalem*, and admonish'd to dismiss his wife ; which he refusing, the priests

PART drove him from the sacrifice. He fled into

I. *Samaria to Sanballath his wife's father, and there persuaded him to erect a temple on mount Gerizim. Which he did, and made Manasses high priest thereof. The people of Samaria resorted to this temple, and refused to go up to Jerusalem to worship in the temple there. This schism continually occasioned heats and animosities among the samaritans and the jews. The woman speaks of this temple: Our fathers, says she, worshipped in this mountain: i. e. our high priest Manasses built (or caused to be built) this temple, and he and the men of that and the succeeding time worshipped in it, and it is our duty to worship here also. Here she gives Christ the samaritan opinion concerning the worship due unto God, viz. that it was a ritual, ceremonial, external performance. This worship she confines to the temple on mount Gerizim, as the place where the samaritans ought to worship. Having thus delivered her opinion concerning worship and the place of its performance, the woman proceeds and gives that of the jews: But ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship, i. e.*
Moses,

Moses, you jews say, said that there should be but one temple and one altar, you tell us, that we ought to destroy this temple, wherein our forefathers and we have worshipped, and resort to worship in the temple of *Jerusalem*. This woman hath in this passage given the different sentiments of the samaritans and the jews about worship. They both agree, that it should be external; but differ about the place of its performance. The argument of the woman is this: I judge, that as our forefathers worshipped in this temple, so ought we to continue worshipping here; we do not require you jews to come hither to worship in this temple, and as we observe the same law and perform the same rites and ceremonies as ye do, and call upon the same God, the enmity between us ought to cease; but, notwithstanding this, your countrymen always quarrel and cavil with us, and say, we ought to worship in the temple at *Jerusalem*. Sir, I believe you are a prophet, What is your opinion of this difference between us? The woman justly concluded, that our Lord would impartially deliver his opinion in this case. But Christ did not

PART undertake to decide the controversy in the manner the expected.

I.

2. OUR Lord, upon this woman's enquiry of him concerning the place of worship, says to her, *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.* Here Christ pronounces the abolition of the ritual, ceremonial, external worship. He tells the woman, that hereafter men shall not be obliged to worship God, either in the temple on mount *Gerizim*, for which the *samaritans* pleaded, nor yet in the temple at *Jerusalem*, to which the jews were for obliging the *samaritans* to come to worship. He tells her, that that sort of worship which both the *samaritans* and the jews then paid unto God, is not acceptable to him, nor worthy of his nature.

3. HAVING declared the insufficiency of external worship, our Lord then proceeds to inform this woman, what that worship is, which is due only unto God. *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth:*

for

for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God CHAP.
 is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must VII.
 worship him in spirit and in truth. He tells
 the woman, that the worship due unto God
 was spiritual, worthy and just apprehensions
 of him, as firm and established principles of
 truth in her soul, and that such worshippers
 only were acceptable before God.

IT therefore follows, that the worship
 God requires of us, is, a spiritual worship,
 and that this worship is, the attributing all
 things out of human reach to God as his
 due, the creation of all things visible and
 invisible, the continual preservation of all
 things by his almighty decree. To think
 of him as omnipotent, omniscient, and om-
 nipresent. To endeavour to form the most
 worthy ideas and apprehensions concerning
 him, we are capable of. To look upon
 him as the author of all good, and no per-
 mitter of evil: as affording us a means of
 redemption. This is the worship our Lord
 says is due unto God, and to him only.

AND it is certain, such thoughts and ap-
 prehensions of God as these, are required by

PART our Lord in his sermon to the people on the

I. mount, "Blessed, *says he*, are the poor in
 "spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of hea-
 Matth. v. "ven." *i. e.* Blessed are they that give
 3. themselves humbly and sincerely to a due
 use of their reasons, who do not think too
 worthily of themselves, nor of others; who
 put no confidence in man, nor trust in idols,
 the works of their own hands, these shall
 seek salvation, imbibe just ideas of God,
 principles of universal love, and purity of
 life and action: for I assure you, that this
 is their right. For so I understand these
 words, *The poor in spirit*, to signify all those
 who think humbly, rationally, and sincere-
 ly: those, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*,
 that men of these dispositions are those ve-
 ry persons, who will think it worth their
 while to embrace the declaration of redemp-
 tion, here stiled, *the kingdom of heaven*. The
 farther sense of these words, as they respect
 the future state of the blessed, I do not re-
 ject. For it is certain, that those persons
 who come in voluntarily and sincerely to the
 kingdom of the gospel, will also be admit-
 ted into the kingdom of heaven.

IN this sense therefore I choose to under-stand these words : “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” *i. e.* Blessed are those who having attained true and rational ideas of the state they are in, endeavour to purify themselves, these shall see and apprehend worthy notions of the divine Essence. And I think a man may in no improper sense be said, even now, to see God, who is thoroughly persuaded, and really believes that there is such a Being, and who ascribes to him, and thinks of him, the most rational and worthy ideas he is capable of conceiving. He certainly through faith sees God, looks upon him as he is, a Being in himself perfect, no respecter of persons, the common Father of us all, and the author of all good. The future sense of these words, is certainly true : those who to purity and justness of thought, add sanctity of life and action, universal love, and a hearty desire of salvation, these shall see God at the time of restitution, and be admitted into the dwellings of eternity.

CHAP.
VII.

Ver. 8.

OUR Lord's sermon on the mount, contained in *Matth.* v, vi, vii. is no other than

PART I. his arguings with mankind to imbrace just ideas of God, of universal love to all men, and of a true and upright way of action, and all with this grand view, the salvation of themselves. Which is so plain and obvious to every reader, that I have no occasion to recite many particulars, in order to prove the truth of this assertion.

THE first is, *Matth. v. 9.* "Blessed are the peace-makers : for they shall be called the children of God." In these words are asserted these two things. 1. The peaceable and beneficent nature of the divine Being. 2. That those persons who endeavour to attain a peaceable and quiet disposition of life and action, and so imitate their Creator, *they shall be called the children of God.* The drift and design of these words, seem to me to be this : To instill into the minds of men, a just idea of the peaceable and beneficent nature of the divine Being. *Peace-makers*, are here called, *the children of God.* Parents look upon their children as part of themselves. Our Lord here pronounces those who imitate that glorious perfection of the Deity, *Children of God.* Here then,

then, it is plainly asserted, that God is the fountain of peace, the author of tranquility, the author of pure love, harmony and concord. If then he be essentially peace and love, it follows, that he is no respecter of persons; but that he is the common benefactor of all men, the author of all good, and the Being who lays claim to the most worthy ideas we can form of him. I take these words then, to assert: that the divine Nature is the author of all good. And we ought to look upon him as such.

I SAY, it was the design of our Lord to instill into men just and worthy apprehensions of the divine Essence, to introduce universal love and concord among all men, and to excite in them a hearty desire of salvation. Principles, which, he in the next *verse*, calls *righteousness*. They who are, or shall be, persecuted for holding these noble principles, *Theirs*, says our Lord, *is the kingdom of heaven*.

IF any man entertained worthy notions of things, these, our Lord assures us, he came not to obliterate, but to confirm.

“ Think

PART "Think not, *says he*, that I am come

I. "to destroy the law or the prophets: I

W "am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

By the law, I understand, first, the *decalogue* which *Moses* gave to the children of *Israel*; and, secondly, the natural or moral law. The *decalogue* is cited by our Lord in his sermon on the mount. As *Matth.* v. 8.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery." He introduces these words thus: "Ye have

"heard that it hath been said by them of
"old time, Thou shalt not commit adul-

"tery." And then follows his own words,

"But I say unto you, that whosoever look-

"eth on a woman to lust after her, hath

"committed adultery with her already in

"his heart." The argument is this: It is

a common opinion among you jews, that if

a man lusteth for a woman, yet if he re-

fraineth from the act, he is not guilty of the

breach of the law. But, I say, ye ought to

go yet farther, and not be guilty even in

desire of breaking this law; for, it is cer-

tain, although the act passeth not, the per-

son who looketh lustfully on a woman hath

offended against this law in his heart, and

in his mind committed adultery. This is

generally

generally understood with a very great limitation, to relate only to the married pair: but, it is certain, our Lord here forbids, all manner of fornication, and all kinds of lasciviousness, courtship as well as gallantry.

CHAP.
VII.

If mankind would imbibe the principles of chastity, our Lord is recorded to have published, how gloriously would they tend to the attainment of an universal love and concord among all his disciples. If we were to enquire, why christians are so miserably divided among themselves, insomuch that they are become haters of one another, we should soon perceive, that the want of the principle of chastity is the very cause of it; or if there be other causes, yet that this is the principal.

OUR Lord says, "Swear not at all." Ver. 34. And, "Let your communication be yea, Ver. 37. "yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more "than these, cometh of evil." Common and prophane swearing is certainly here forbid. This is the opinion of all. But the words are absolute, *Swear not at all.* It should seem, that our Lord looked upon swearing

PART swearing to be a useless custom. It is certain, that solemn swearing, is very dishonourable. Christians, yea, all men ('tis a dictate of reason) should always speak the truth, and not endeavour to impose upon one another. But how much more dishonourable, as well as sinful, is the custom of those who commonly avouch the truth of what they say, with an oath, or lightly and irreverently take the name of their God in vain. This is certainly to be avoided by every one. And so ought solemn swearing to be avoided as much as is possible, but as the degeneracy of mankind is such, that the use of solemn swearing is become necessary; so every one who is obliged by our law thus to swear to the truth, when he takes such an oath, is also obliged to speak the truth at all other times, as candidly and sincerely, as though he were obliged by such a manner of swearing. All this is implied in the words, *But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.* That is, let your conversation always be full of words, that are truth, and tend to good.

BUT

BUT farther, these words, *But let your communication be, &c.* contain a prohibition of all vanities. There is nothing more certain, than that our Lord doth here forbid, the use of obscene ditties, love-songs, and ballads, plays, opera's, masquerades and balls, as diversions in themselves repugnant to true principles, retarding the celestial motions of the soul, and pegging it down to the earth. These vitiate the minds of men, and render them debauched. They minister no real advantage to society, they tend only to debauch our youth of both sexes, they excite their passions, and render them sinful. I say, these practices are forbid by our Lord. It is true, we live under a government that is christian, and it were to be wished, that they would put the law of God in force, and restrain all sorts of viciousness, as things destructive of the morals of the society over which they preside.

BESIDES, the prohibition of these things, I instance in a few others, which are equally forbid by Christ; as, all obscene discourse, vain and trifling invocation of the
name

PART name of God, the reading and repetition of
 I. plays, love-songs, love-stories, books of
 court-intrigues, courtship and gallantry:
 these are not to be used by those who sin-
 cerely lay hold of those principles which
 Christ hath taught.

Ver. 43,
 &c.

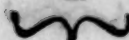
OUR Lord having thus informed man-
 kind, how they ought to behave themselves
 in respect of reciprocal conversation, pro-
 ceeds in the next place to instill into men the
 principles of universal love, unity and con-
 cord. “ Ye have heard, *says he*, that it
 “ hath been said, Thou shalt love thy
 “ neighbour, and hate thy enemy: But I
 “ say unto you: Love your enemies, bless
 “ them that curse you, do good to them
 “ that hate you, and pray for them which
 “ despitefully use you, and persecute you.
 “ That ye may be the children of your Fa-
 “ ther which is in heaven, for he maketh
 “ his sun to rise on the evil and on the good,
 “ and sendeth rain on the just and on the
 “ unjust. For if ye love them which love
 “ you, what reward have you? do not
 “ even the publicans the same? And if you
 “ salute your brethren only, what do ye
 “ more

“ more than others ? do not even the pub-
“ licans so ? Be ye therefore perfect, even
“ as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

CHAP.
VII.


THESE words contain a summary of our Lord's arguing with mankind upon the subject of love. In it he sets forth the reasonableness of it, and its natural tendence to make men perfect. His argument, both with jews and gentiles, lies before us thus : It is an old tradition among men, that ye love him, which loveth you, and that you hate them, that hateth you. It is true, ye ought to do good unto them, that do good unto you. But it does not follow, that ye should hate them which hate you. It is not just, that one man should hate another, because he is of this or that sect, nation, city, or country, although he professes himself your enemy, yet ye ought to be ready to preserve his life, to do unto him all those friendly offices which ye would do unto your neighbour, or friend, and which, if you were in his place, ye would he should do unto you. I say unto you, love all men whether they are of this or that kingdom, nation, city or place, whether they profess themselves

PART themselves your enemies, or your friends.

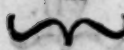
I.  If any person speaketh evil of you, if he endeavours to take away your good name ; if he flanders and backbites you ; be ye not thereby led to speak evil of him, to slander or backbite him : be ye far from this. If any person becomes your open and avowed enemy, and seeks the destruction of your life ; do not ye seek the destruction of his : for it is a thing very inconclusive, for you to be his enemy, because he is your enemy. Do ye, though ye meet with ill treatment from him, speak well and friendly of him and to him, do ye seek and endeavour to do him all the services that lies in your power. And, let this your principle of love diffuse itself in thought and action to all the human race. To this add ; your hearty desires and sincere wishes, that they may live soberly, and righteously, and that they may have a particular regard to the salvation of their souls. And whoever imbibes this principle will therein resemble God, whose child he is, for he is the common parent of all men, he provides for all without exception, whether they be those who do wickedly, or those who do righteously. His sun ye see
shineth

shineth upon all, and his rain descendeth
upon the inhabitants of all nations. Imitate
therefore your God and Creator, for he is
perfect in love.

AFTER this, our Lord proceeds to direct his disciples in their outward deportment, in respect to divers duties, and especially in their concern for temporal things. But concludes, that before the welfare of their bodies, they ought to seek the kingdom of God, that is, men ought principally to take care to imbibe worthy and just ideas of God, principles of universal love, and principles of redemption. And I doubt not, if the seeking these principles were duly attended to, but all these things would be the natural consequences of them. I do not mean, a superfluity or grand affluence of possessions, but such a competency as would render a man fit for the great work of salvation, such a subsistence as would be between poverty and riches. And this is what our Lord means in those important words, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, Matth. vi, and his righteousness, and all these things³³ shall be added unto you." A man im-

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mersed

PART I. mersed in wealth, in worldly possessions, and in pomp, is the most unlikely of all others, to imbibe the principles which Christ hath taught. And our Lord, who understood the nature of riches better than we, delivers it as his opinion, that it is very hard for a rich man to imbibe his principles;

Matth. xix. especially, that of universal love: “ Veri-
23, 24. ly, [*says he, unto his disciples*] I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel [*or a cable-rope*] to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” I think the meaning of the words is this: That a rich man is, generally, so much taken up with the honours, the preferments, the pleasures and vices of his degeneracy, the affluence of company, and the like, that he will not be persuaded to lay aside these things; (or if he is, it will be with the utmost difficulty) and imbibe ideas worthy of God, principles of love, and an hearty desire of redemption.

AND this our Lord farther confirms in the parable of the marriage of the king’s son.

son. He there sets forth the love mankind will have to vice and merchandize, and that they will prefer these to his principles. One, says he, will prefer his farm, his shop, or marriage, or the like, to the attainment of ideas worthy of God, to principles of universal love, and even to the desire of redemption.

PRINCIPLES of universal love, are in several other places of scripture recorded to be inculcated by our Lord: Thus, *Matth. xix. 19.* he tells the young man, that he should love his neighbour as himself; that is, that he should be as desirous of the temporal and spiritual welfare of all men, and if it lay in his power to promote either, as he would be in his own case.

AGAIN, in answer to the lawyer's question, recorded *Matth. xxii. 35, &c.* our Lord says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. And, [*he says*] this is the second and great commandment." Hereby plainly affirming, that universal love, is the second principle which all men ought to attain. And says, it bears a re-

PART semblance with the first principle, namely,
 I. the love of God, or the attainment of
 such just notions and worthy apprehensions
 of him, as is compatible with his Essence,
 and which we are capable of conceiving.
 In like manner, we ought to think of all men,
 as we would rationally think of ourselves.
 As for instance: Is God our Father, so is
 he the Father of all men. Has he created
 the world for us, so has he in like manner
 for all the inhabitants of it: has he de-
 scended from heaven and proclaimed redem-
 ption to us, so has he to all without excep-
 tion: shall we be admitted into heaven, if
 we lay hold of the overtures of salvation, so
 shall all men, if they take the same method:
 do we wish ourselves health and prosperity,
 so we ought to wish all men: do we wish
 to live holy and just lives, so we ought to
 wish that all men would do the same: do we
 desire to be found among the sons of God,
 so ought we to desire that all men may be
 found there also: do we expect admission
 into heaven, we ought also to expect the ad-
 mission of all mankind: in short, do we
 hope to be in heaven ourselves, let us hope
 to meet all the lapsed there also.

IN

IN *John* xiii. 35. our Lord is recorded to have declared to his disciples, that the principle of universal love, should be the characteristic by which all men should know that they were his disciples. This principle he enjoined his followers another time, as we read, *Cb.* xv. 12. which injunction, *St. John* records in these words: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." The love of our Lord in the gospel of redemption was universal, it was designed for the common good of all men. No one single person is shut out from the benefits of it: but like the sun shineth unto all, and as the rain, descendeth upon all the sons of disobedience. This is the love of our God, and herein we are to imitate him. Our love like the sun is to diffuse itself to all mankind. We are not to look upon any single person as abhorred of God, or shut out of heaven, or denied the benefits of the glorious dispensation of redemption; but look on them as having equal right to all spiritual immunities, and heartily wish that all will seek salvation.

PART

I.

SECT. V.

THE gospel naturally tends to the perfection of our nature, and to our present and future happiness.

IT is obvious from what has been already offered in this chapter, that the gospel proposes to men a system of ideas and principles internally excellent in themselves, viz. just and worthy ideas of God, principles of universal love, and of redemption.

AND this system of principles taught by our Lord, as the rule of our actions, is suited to the peace of the world, and to the utmost perfection of our immortal souls, or reasons. We are now able, by the means hereof to acquire the most just and settled ideas of God: the most exact rules of love and charity; and the most earnest and sure principles of thirst for the mansions of bliss and eternity.

NOTHING in fact is more certain, than that the ideas and principles of the gospel tend

tend to our present happiness. To instance in two or three of its moral injunctions.

1. Pure chastity: the happy consequences of which are: health, peace, concord, unity, and true love. 2. Justice: repugnant to this principle, are the sins of oppression, theft, over-reaching in trade and traffic, murder, rapine, &c. And were we so happy, as to make a due use of the powers of our reasons, and so universally imbibe the principles of our Lord in their purity; I humbly conceive, that all enmity, discord, war and confusion would cease; the powers of this world would have no occasion to use arts of destruction and of death; no kingdoms would suffer a conquest, nor cities the direful consequences of sieges: one man would not detriment another; and so the fountain of force and violence would be dried up: the present pleas for murder and rapine would vanish like smoke; and the glorious brightness of love, beneficence to all, and support of each other, appear in full splendor and glory.

AGAIN, the ideas and principles of the gospel naturally tend to our future happiness.

PART I. *ness.* It is allowed on all hands, that our souls are immortal. This indeed is a principle of the gospel, and is included in the fundamental principle of redemption. Whatever system of ideas and principles endeavour to wean us from the love of this world, and directs us to the abodes of a happy eternity; these tend to the perfection of our spiritual beings. For we must become fit for the celestial dignity, before it is possible for us to gain admission to it.

THIS is the peculiar tendency of the gospel: its ideas and principles expelled the mosaic religion, which external performance of rites and ceremonies, our forefathers were not able to bear. A burden as grievous, as unnecessary. A system of rules and injunctions not able to perfect men for the habitations of eternity. In its stead, the gospel has introduced a true spiritual worship: the attainment of the most just and worthy ideas and apprehensions of the divine Essence: ideas which cause our souls to soar above the earth, and with the eye of truth and sincere faith gives us a view of our future perfection and bliss. And if to such our spiritual

ritual worship, we add universal love, pu-
rity of life and action, and a hearty desire
of salvation, we shall be admitted into hea-
ven, and gain restoration, though now
lapsed.

C H A P.
VII.

ALL good men must needs with the profoundest grief and concern for the present and future welfare of their brethren, reflect upon the unhappiness of too too many, who, notwithstanding they have enjoyed the methods of salvation, and heard the principles of Jesus, are to a shameful degree sinners, and reprobates: men who have unjust and unworthy notions of God, have no true principles of love and charity; and are so fond of the vanities of this world, that they do not reflect upon eternity; but choose rather to gratify their accumulated passions, than purify their souls.

IT must be confessed, that the flock of Christ, that is, those who are his real disciples, are but a small number. How small, every man may judge in some measure, if he considers the vices and degeneracy of the age: The first part of life, childhood,
and

PART and youth, in both sexes, is generally spent
 I. in acquiring trash: Music, dancing, plays,
 and such-like accomplishments: these are
 the acquisitions then made: and it were to
 be wished, that this was all. The next
 scene that opens, is too often, courtship,
 whoring and gallantry. Then comes
 on the care of providing for wife and fa-
 mily, and by what unjust methods this is
 too often done, is very notorious: not to
 mention the sin of adultery, and its conse-
 quences; nor the vile and abominable sin of
 sodomy. Then follows old-age, attended
 with sickness, peevishness, swearing, repe-
 titions of juvenile courtships, gallan-
 tries, and the like, till at last they drop
 into the grave.

BUT if the dictates of true reason, the
 rules of christianity, were followed, the first
 part of life would be spent in acquiring the
 ideas of truth; the young person would seek
 good principles early, remember his Crea-
 tor in the days of his youth; sacrifice the
 first-fruits of his life to truth, and study to
 walk in such paths as lead to happiness here
 and hereafter. The principles of Christ, if
 imbibed

imbibed early, will be a lantern to his feet, and a light unto his paths: and so in no improper sense, to his case, may be applied those words of the *Psalmist*: As
 “ the hills stand about Jerusalem, even so
 “ standeth the Lord roundabout his people,^{2.}
 “ from this time forth for evermore.”

CHAP.
VII.

Psal. cxxv.

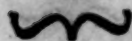
SECT. VI.

THE gospel therefore lays claim to our assent and consent.

As it is evident, that the gospel is a system of ideas, rules and principles which tend to our present and future happiness, to the perfection of our nature both here and hereafter, it follows, that we ought to imbrace it upon that account. And thus it lays the highest and strongest claim to our sincere reception, assent and consent.

UPON the whole: the gospel does appear, a system of ideas and principles every way worthy of God for its Author and Revealer.

CHAP.



C H A P. VIII.

MIRACLES confirm the TRUTH of
the GOSPEL.

I. *The nature of a MIRACLE wrought by CHRIST.* II. *The USE of CHRIST's miracles.* III. *The probability of these miracles. The occasion of their performance. Their beautiful circumstantial and apparent veracity.* IV. *A few observations upon the subject.*

ALTHOUGH the internal excellency of the GOSPEL, and a due consideration of its natural and intrinsic worth and tendence to make us happy in our present state, and to bring us to consummate perfection, bliss, and endless felicity in the mansions of eternity, are sufficient to convince that person, who makes a due and proper use of his rational

tional powers, of its TRUTH and VALIDITY; and will always determine his assent and consent: yet the evidence arising from a due reflexion on the miracles wrought in favour of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION will also be found a potent argument to *confirm* and *establish* him in his sincere and hearty reception of the GOSPEL.

SECT. I.

THE nature of a MIRACLE wrought by CHRIST.

A MIRACLE said to be performed by our Lord was not an act done in favour of him, and his doctrine, by the agency of angels; but was an act performed by his own will and power, without the interposition of any other agent whatever. “For in him, *says* Col. ii. 9. “*the apostle*, dwelleth all the fulness of the “Godhead bodily.” So that a miracle, or mighty work, performed by Christ, was not an act above his essential power and infinite capacity, because in him dwelt the godhead bodily; but was an act, as much, and more, within his reach, as the acts of walking

PART walking and speaking are within the power and reach of a man. A miracle, therefore, performed by our Saviour is an act wonderful and surprizing to us, contrary to the settled laws and rules of nature ; but is not a miracle in respect of him the performer, because it was not beyond or above his almighty reach. And, indeed, I cannot see, how Christ can in a real sense be said, to be the performer of supernatural works, if the miracles he is said to perform, were wrought not by his own power and authority, and if they were beyond his reach, and were performed by the interposition of other agents, then those agents were the authors and performers of these miracles, and not Christ to whom they are ascribed. Therefore, if it be said, that spiritual agents in subordination to Christ, interposed and brought to pass his miracles, then it would follow, that Christ was not the performer of miracles. And all that could be ascribed to Christ in this affair, is, that he was certain such miracles would be wrought in his favour, and that he was endued with foreknowledge to predict them.

BUT

BUT as this is contrary to the truth, and Christ was a performer of miracles in the most absolute sense; so it follows, that he performed them by his own power, without the interposition of any agent or power whatever. Agreeable hereto is his own claim to this power, "I WILL [*says he to the leper*] "be thou clean, *Matth. viii. 3.*" And *John x. 37. 38.* "If I do not the works of "my Father, believe me not; but if I do, "though you believe not me, believe the "works; that ye may know and believe "that the Father is in me, and I in him." Here, and in several other places, Christ positively asserts, that the power of working miracles, or performing wonderful works, was an essential act of his own will and power. He commanded dead *Lazarus* to come forth, and he came forth, tho' he had lain in the grave four days. He spake the word, and the most inveterate sicknesses and diseases, that had baffled the physician's skill and the rotation of nature, were instantly healed. He blessed a small quantity of food, and it fed five thousand. He said to the sea, bear me; and it became

PART as dry ground ; and to the winds and tempests, be ye still ; and immediately they were calm.

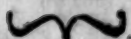
I.

THESE miracles were performed by his own innate infinite power, without the interposition of any agent whatever. And this definition of a miracle, said to be wrought by Christ, appears to me, a true and real definition. For it does not follow, in order to make an act in itself miraculous, that it should be above the power of the Person or Being performing such an act, but only above the reach of nature, contrary to the common method of action, and to men miraculous. Thus for instance : should God stop the course of the earth for the space of a day, this would be a miracle to us, but not unto him, who is infinite in power. In like manner, Christ's miracles, were miracles to us, but not unto him the performer. Because he was God as well as man, having taken upon him the seed of *Abraham*. Or being, as our excellent *creed* words it, perfect God, and perfect Man. *

Heb. ii.
16.

SECT.

* Vid. *Liturgy*, Athanasian Creed.

THE *use* of CHRIST's *miracles*.

THE principal design of Christ in working miracles, appears to me to be this: To establish his doctrine: to convince men of the intrinsic excellence and natural tendency of his gospel to make them happy here and hereafter, and by which he demonstrated his divine power. But this was not the only motive that led him to work miracles. His mercy and compassion to the miseries of mankind, often induced him to heal their infirmities. It is true, he always preached the gospel at such times as he did these generous acts; but many times he preached the gospel, when he did not work miracles. His chief care was to preach the gospel, and if the people who heard his doctrine brought an incurable, and besought Jesus to heal him, he spake the word, and he was made whole. And so he did, when the incurables themselves begged his favour and compassion. He never ostentatiously worked a miracle.

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THE

PART

I.

THE credit of the miracles of Christ depends now upon the truth and veracity of the recorders of them; for we have but little now left to ascertain the truth of them, but the testimony of the four evangelists; and the general belief, credit, and oral tradition of them by all christians, from the period wherein they were performed to this present time. And whether they are really true, we may be convinced from the probability of them; especially, if we consider these two particulars: 1. That the person said to perform these wonderful works, was God, who, in a miraculous manner, assumed the human nature: *John* i. 1, 2, 3, 14. *Heb.* i. 3. *Rev.* i. 8. xxii. 13. 2. That therefore how surprizing soever these transactions do appear, yet as the performer was infinite in power, so it must be considered, that nothing was impossible to him. To this we may add: the simplicity of their relation, the several circumstantialia of these facts, the cause and manner of their performance. In order to which, I shall lay before the reader, a brief account of the performance of some of the miracles which are recorded by

by the evangelists to have been wrought by Christ, as an appeal to his reason, whether he ought not to admit, that miracles (the relation of them) even at this day, testify the truth of christianity.

CHAP.
VIII.

I WOULD therefore remark, that it has appeared upon enquiry, that the gospel is in itself excellent, tending to our good, by purifying and perfecting our nature; and if it does appear, that the miracles wrought by Christ are consonant with, and agreeable to this worthy design, it will be a strong argument for our belief of them.

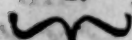
SECT. III.

THE probability of these miracles. The occasion of their performance. Their beautiful circumstances and apparent veracity.

THE first miracle recorded to have been wrought by Christ, is that of his supernatural assumption of our nature. This was his own proper act, and not wrought by the agency of any being in favour of

PART him. "For verily, *says St. Paul*, he took

I.



Heb. ii.
16.

"not on him, the nature of angels, but he
"took on him the seed of Abraham."

It pleased the almighty Redeemer of mankind to take our nature of a pure virgin, who knew not a man. To him who was the Author of all things, this was possible. *St. Matthew* begins his history of the birth, life, doctrine, miracles, and death of Christ, with the relation of this stupendous instance

Matth. i.
18, 19.

of our Lord's infinite power: "Now the
"birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:
"When as his mother Mary was espoused
"to Joseph, before they came together,
"she was found with child of the Holy
"Ghost. Then Joseph her husband being
"a just man, and not willing to make her
"a publick example, was minded to put
"her away privily."

WE may justly conclude, that when *Mary* was found with child, and accused of it both by *Joseph*, his friends, and her own, she declared, that although she was with child, yet it was not by man. It is certain, *Joseph* (and relations) was convinced by ocular demonstration that no man had impregnated

nated *Mary*. And this I take to be meant CHAP. VIII.
 by this expression: *And before they came to-*
gether, she was found with child of the holy
Ghost. i. e. upon a mature and diligent
 search made upon the sacred body of the
 holy virgin, it did appear that no man had
 been in conjunction with her: and yet, al-
 though there did appear upon her all the
 marks of a pure and undefiled virginity,
 she was big with child. *Joseph*, her
 espoused husband, amazed at this wonder-
 ful event, conscious to himself of the cha-
 stity of the blessed virgin, was for putting
 her away privily. But still reflecting within
 himself on all the marks and tokens of her
 innocence, he repented of his intentions, and
 waited the glorious issue of a virgin mother.
 “ For *Joseph* knew not *Mary* until she had Matth. i.
 “ brought forth her first-born son.” 25.

JOSEPH was certainly convinced of
 the natural innocence of *Mary* even at first;
 for he did not proceed to make a public ex-
 ample of her, which he would have done, if
 he was conscious to himself, that there had
 appeared any signs or tokens of inconti-
 nence, either in her person or behaviour.

PART He could not fairly, have been stiled a just man, if he had been convinced that *Mary* was guilty of the breach of her virginity, when he endeavoured rather to conceal her crime, and not make her a public example. Justice in this case, if she had been guilty, would have directed him to have punished her, according to the law of *Moses*. But the case being quite otherwise, and *Joseph* and several others perceiving, that *Mary* was naturally innocent, the title of just belongs to him.

THE evangelist says, *she was found with child of the holy Ghost*. Who found her with child? *Joseph* only, or the relations on both sides, it is most likely, all of them. The expression, *she was found with child*, intimates two things: first, that an inspection was made on the sacred body of the holy virgin: for it does appear from the words of the evangelist, that an inspection was made on the person of *Mary*, before *Joseph* and she came together. And *she was FOUND*, that is, an inspection was made on the body of the virgin. Secondly, that several persons were concerned in making this inspection,

tion. It is most likely, the nearest relations of *Mary's*, and the nearest relations of *Joseph's*; a father and mother on one side, and a father and mother on the other. And it

CHAP.

VIII.

being found by these inspectors, that *Mary* was big with child, and upon examination, found that it was without the concurrence of a man; they must of consequence conclude, that the work was supernatural and divine, and there might be several other persons (women) ocularly convinced of the truth of the holy virgin's innocence by natural evidence.

Joseph, indeed, cannot be thought one of the first who inspected the sacred body of the blessed virgin: but, it is certain, he was afterwards ocularly convinced of her innocence and natural virginity; and is signified to us in these words: "But while he

Ver. 20.

"thought on THESE THINGS, [*i. e.* while he thought on the report made by the inspectors to him, of *Mary's* natural innocence and virginity, altho' big with child]

"behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, *Joseph*, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee, *Mary* thy wife: for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost."

U 4

Hence

PART Hence it is plain, that *Joseph* found his wife
 I. big with child of the Holy Ghost; *i. e.* although he did find her really with child, yet it was not by man, because *Mary* his wife had all the marks of a natural virginity then upon her; he, therefore justly, concluded, that the work was divine. Upon this conviction, *Joseph* took unto him his wife, and expected, that as the conception was miraculous, so the off-spring would be that Being whom he, and the jews, had long expected to appear in the flesh. And, therefore, he called his name *JESUS*, being persuaded, that this child might be that very person, who would save his people from their sins.

THE innocent virgin, undoubtedly, in the humblest strains asserted her innocence. *Joseph*, and relations, were convinced, that she was a person of a modest and chaste behaviour. And could it be supposed, that only five persons were ocularly convinced of the truth of her innocence and natural virginity; these credibly informed others of it, who were full of wonder, that *Mary* was found big with child, when espoused to *Joseph*. At least then fifty persons might be
 privy

privity to this miraculous conception, before the birth of the child. CHAP.
VIII.

ST. *Luke* relating this glorious story tells us, that good old *Simeon*, took the child Luke ii. *Jesus* in his arms, and said, “ Lord, now 28, &c. “ lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. “ For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” It is certain, *Simeon* was a believer of his miraculous conception, and concluded from thence, that he was prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the gentiles, and by being born of the jewish race, was, on that account, the glory of the people of *Israel*.

ELIZABETH, mother of *John* the baptist, and cousin to the blessed virgin *Mary*, also believed this miraculous conception. *Mary*, being with child of Christ, went to see *Elizabeth*, then with child of *John*. *Elizabeth*, believing that *Mary*’s conception was supernatural, and of divine power, says to her: “ Blessed art thou a- Luke i. 42, “ mong women, and blessed is the fruit of “ thy womb. And whence is this to me, “ that the mother of my Lord should come “ to

PART "to me." Hence, *Elizabeth* was one of those persons, who made the inspection on *Mary* related by St. *Matthew*: "Now
 I. *Matth. i. 18.* "when as *Mary* was espoused to *Joseph*,
 "before they came together, she WAS
 "FOUND with child of THE HOLY
 "GHOST." i. e. found with child in a miraculous manner. *Zacharias*, the husband of *Elizabeth*, may justly be supposed to be a witness of this miracle, or a person who really believed it, from the character given him, *Luke i. 5, &c.* If he was not one of the inspectors, he had a credible informer his own wife, *Elizabeth*.

To this let me add: the historical circumstances of the birth of Christ, which are very entertaining, as they are with the greatest appearance of sincerity, plainness and simplicity related by the evangelists, *Matthew* and *Luke*.

1. ST. *Matthew* particularly mentions *Matth. ii. 1, &c.* the place of our Lord's birth, "in Bethlehem of Judea."
2. In whose reign it happened, "in the days of Herod the king."
3. That certain persons, who had long expected

pected the coming of the Messiah, came to *Jerusalem* enquiring for him? “Behold, there came wisemen from the east to *Jerusalem*, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.” 4. What this enquiry occasioned, the discontent of *Herod*, his calling a council, the question put to them, and their solution of it according to ancient prophecy: “When *Herod* the king heard these things he was troubled, and all *Jerusalem* with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them, where Christ should be born. In *Bethlehem* of *Judea*: for thus it is written in the prophet; And thou *Bethlehem* in the land of *Judea* art not the least among the princes of *Juda*: for out of thee shall come a governour that shall rule my people *Israel*.” 5. *Herod*’s fly enquiry of the magi concerning the appearance of the star, his sending them to *Bethlehem*, and their departure: “Then *Herod* when he had privily called the wisemen, enquired of them diligently what time the star

PART “ star appeared. And he sent them to

I. “ Bethlehem, and said, Go and search dili-

“ gently for the young child, and when ye

“ have found him, bring me word again,

“ that I may come and worship him also.

“ When they had heard the king, they de-

“ parted.” 6. The wisemen in their jour-

ney see the star again, which filled them with

joy, and directed them to the young child,

they worship him. “ And lo, the star which

“ they saw in the east, went before them,

“ till it came and stood over where the

“ young child was. When they saw the

“ star, they rejoiced with exceeding great

“ joy. And when they were come into the

“ house, they saw the young child with

“ Mary his mother, and fell down and wor-

“ shipped him, and when they had opened

“ their treasures they presented unto him

“ gifts ; gold, frankincense and myrrhe.”

7. Their departure into their own country,

and their not returning to *Herod*, to give

him an account of those things they had seen

and heard : “ And being warned of God in

“ a dream, that they should not return to

“ Herod, they departed into their own

“ country another way.” 8. *Joseph's* con-

duct

duct, journey and stay in *Egypt*: “ And
 “ when they were departed, — he took
 “ the young child and his mother by night,
 “ and departed into *Egypt*. And was there
 “ until the death of *Herod*.” 9. The fury
 of *Herod*, upon the wisemens disappointment
 of him, and his slaughter of the infants of
Bethlehem: “ Then *Herod* when he saw
 “ that he was mocked of the wisemen, was
 “ exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew
 “ all the children that were in *Bethlehem*,
 “ and in all the coasts thereof, from two
 “ years old and under.” 10. *Herod* dies,
Joseph brought *Mary* and *Jesus* into *Israel*,
 but hearing that *Archelaus*, *Herod*’s son,
 reigned in *Judea*, he went and dwelt in
Nazareth of *Galilee*: “ But when *Herod*
 “ was dead, — he took the young child and
 “ his mother, and came into the land of
 “ *Israel*. But when he heard that *Arche-*
 “ *laus* did reign in *Judea*, in the room of
 “ his father *Herod*, he was afraid to go
 “ thither: — he turned aside into the parts
 “ of *Galilee*: and he came and dwelt in a
 “ city called *Nazareth*.” These are the
 circumstantial of the birth of *Christ* re-
 corded by *St. Matthew*.

PART

I.

IT is certain, the eastern sages, when they first saw the star, they concluded, that the divine person they expected should appear, was then born. This is evident from their question: *Where is he THAT is born king of the jews? for, (say they) we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.* The appearance of this new star was the very occasion of their journey, and enquiry. This enquiry, and reason, made a great noise at *Jerusalem*. The reason why it made a great noise, was this: the jews had general expectations of the coming of the Messiah, and the Messiah was known by the appellative, *The king of the jews*. And these sages, not being jews, ask, *Where is he that is born king of the jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him, i. e.* We are sure, that the king of the jews is born, by the appearance of a new and glorious star, tell us, inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, where he is, that we may go and pay unto him the respect due to sovereign princes. Thus made they enquiry in *Jerusalem*; which soon reached *Herod's* ears. The subject of their journey gave great uneasiness

easiness and disquiet to him : as, *first*, the positiveness of their enquiry, *Where is he THAT IS BORN king of the jews?* wherein they assert, that the person they ask after, was already born. *2dly*, Their positive reason for such their positive enquiry and assertion ; *for, we have seen HIS STAR in the east.* They asserted publicly in *Jerusalem*, that they had seen in their own country a star , which was not before among the eastern constellations. They affirmed, that this new star was a sign of the birth of the king of the jews. And, that this star induced them to come to *Jerusalem* to enquire for him. *3dly*, Their positive intention of paying adoration, or at least sovereign respect. *And (say they) we are come to worship him, i. e.* we are certain, that this person, who is now born among you, ought to be worshipped and revered by all nations, by us gentiles as well as by you jews. And the evangelist assures us, that this enquiry, not only troubled *Herod*, then king of the jews, but all the people which dwelt in *Jerusalem*. It must be concluded, that all the people in *Jerusalem*, were in expectation, about this time, of the rise of a temporal

PART temporal king, and therefore were very in-
I. quislitive about the appearance of the star.
And as many as could personally conversed
with these sages. In so much, that it was
observable, the whole body of the jews were
in dispute about these things, some saying
one thing, and some another. But no one
person was more affected with it than *Herod*.
He being chief in *Jerusalem*, takes the mat-
ter into consideration; and being willing to
know the truth of this affair, calls together
divers men, who were learned in the law
and prophets: these being assembled, he
learned the solution of the wise mens enquiry.
And leaving the council, he sends for these
sages, and tells them, that according to an-
cient prophecy, he was to be born in *Beth-
lehem of Judea*. And having told them this,
he commissions them to go thither; but
charges them to return and give an account
of what they should see and hear. The sages
proceed in their journey, and having found
the divine Babe, it is certain, made an en-
quiry concerning his conception, birth, and
the like. This they were prompted to do,
by the star they had seen. *Mary* and *Jo-
seph*, and others then present, assured these
wise

wife men, that his conception was miraculous: an act wherein no man was concerned: and that she had no pain in her delivery. These, and such-like facts, these wise men were convinced was truth. They believed that he was a divine person, and were confirmed in that belief, because his production or procreation was after a supernatural manner. And when they had worshipped him, they consulted what they should do: whether they should return to *Herod*, or depart into their own country without going through *Jerusalem*. They concluded, from what they had seen and heard, that it was very likely, that Jesus was the very person whom the jews would look upon as their king: they, on the other hand, were not ignorant of the cruel temper of *Herod*; they judged, that if they returned to *Jerusalem*, and told *Herod*, that the young child was miraculously born, and that he promised thereby, and by the appearance of the star, to be a great and victorious prince, who would govern the jews, and make all nations subject to him; it would enrage *Herod*, who to secure the succession in his own family, would en-

PART I. deavour to put the Infant to death. They therefore without returning to *Jerusalem*, to give him an answer, return privately into their own country. They not returning according to *Herod's* appointment, he grew very angry. The wise men, probably, had told *Joseph*, that *Herod* had sent them, and that they suspected his designs were not good in requiring them to return. *Joseph* took the item, and being thoroughly convinced of the supernatural procreation of the Infant, and that he was the great prophet they expected, and for whose appearance they had long waited, he immediately quits the town of *Bethlehem*, lest *Herod* should find him, and travels into *Egypt*; and so our Lord escaped the fury of *Herod*, who sent forth his armed men with orders to slay all the infants in *Bethlehem*, from two years old and under, thereby intending to have slain the Infant *Jesus*.

ST. *Luke* gives us a relation of several circumstances concerning this glorious event, the incarnation of the Son of God. He

Luke ii. 1, tells us, that a decree of *Cesar Augustus's*
2, &c. was put in force about the time of his nati-
vity ;

vity ; that *Cyrenius* was governour in *Syria* CHAP.
at that time ; that, by virtue of this decree, VIII.
all persons born in *Judea* were obliged to go
to their respective cities, or places of their
birth, to be taxed, or enrolled ; that *Joseph*
and *Mary* did so ; and, that *Jesus* was born
in *Bethlehem*, the place whither this decree
obliged *Joseph* and *Mary* to come. But
what is chiefly to be noted in *St. Luke's* ac-
count is, that several men hearing *Christ* was
born, come to *Bethlehem* and find *Mary* and
the young child, and departing “ made
“ known abroad the saying which was told
“ them concerning this child.” Now, I
presume, *the SAYING which was told them*
concerning Christ, was a relation of his su-
pernatural conception, which was told them
by *Mary*, *Joseph* and others. This SAYING,
i. e. this astonishing and miraculous event,
they spoke of, in all places, wherever they
came.

Now, the use I would make of what has
been offered, is, 1. To shew, that God the
Son did miraculously assume the human na-
ture, being born of a virgin, without the
concurrence of a man. 2. That divers per-

PART I. sons were really convinced of this fact; the inspectors of the sacred body of the holy virgin, and others credited this event, who were present at his birth in *Betlehem*.

As to the first, that God the Son did in a supernatural manner, assume our nature, those who believe him God as well as man, will not in the least question; for this, tho' astonishing and unaccountable to us, is, in his way of action, possible. This miraculous act of his, is a potent testimony of his divinity and infinite power.

As to the second, the witnesses of this fact, I judge it appears, that there were many persons, men and women, ocularly convinced of Christ's supernatural conception, and others credited it upon their testimony. Many might be induced to believe, that our Lord's assumption of nature was miraculous: as the wise men of the east, by their observation of the appearance of a new star, and these being believers of this glorious event, undoubtedly, divulged it wherever they came. The shepherds, by the appearance of an angel and the heavenly host,

host, were led to credit this saying, which was told them by *Mary*, *Joseph*, and others who were with the holy maid in *Betlehem*. CHAP. VIII.

All the women who flocked about *Mary*, on this occasion, greatly admired at her natural strength and vigour, which, on this stupendous birth, was so far from being decayed, or weakened, that she was able to perform the natural offices of a tender mother, and nurse the divine babe. While the blessed virgin bore in her sacred womb, the God of heaven and earth she felt no pain, and when she travailed with him, she brought him forth without the least pain : nor needed she the usual tendence and care, which women in her case always require. In short, the God of nature passed through the door of the womb with such tenderness, that when *Mary* was delivered, all the marks of a natural virginity, which are to be found on the most chaste and unpolluted virgin, were found upon her. Those persons who saw the blessed maid, after her delivery, in full strength and vigour, must certainly by such a surprizing event be led to believe, that the conception was supernatural and divine. Women, especially, were convinced that

PART her case was extraordinary. When they saw
 I. her brisk and well, needing none of the indulgences of teeming women, they asked her the reason of it. The holy maid, *Joseph* in particular, and others affirmed, that the child was the off-spring of a supernatural cause: an act in which no man was concerned, that she had felt no pain, nor sickness during her conception and travail: of the truth of which *Mary's* health was an evidence. The one could not avoid giving some account of this wonderful event, nor could they that heard and seen these things avoid believing it, in some measure.

HENCE, this appears a miracle credible and well attested. It was the first supernatural act which God the Word was pleased to work in order to convince mankind, that he was the Being whose principles they ought to imbibe, and whose doctrines and laws they ought to receive and observe.

ST. *Matthew* gives us a summary account of divers miracles which our Lord wrought upon his first declaration of the gospel of the kingdom. To establish the truth of what
 he

he said, he condescends to heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases among the people. This he assures us, Jesus did in *Galilee*, even to as many as desired it of him. If the incurables, for such were they that Christ healed, were to be selected out of one of our populous cities, the number would be considerable. Let this be the case of one of the cities of *Galilee*, let all those who had been many years afflicted with inveterate diseases, &c. that had defied the physician's skill, and even the rotation of nature, be desirous of being healed of their infirmities. Let us suppose, as is the very truth, that Christ went into one of the public and most frequented cities in *Galilee*, and there preached such doctrines as these: Behold, ye shall worship the Lord your God in spirit and in truth; look upon him as the common Father of all men, as a Being the most perfect, the consummate good, the author of all things, the lover of all men, of the gentiles, as well as of the jews, the respecter of the inhabitants of the most despicable place or city, as well as of the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*. Entertain ye the justest ideas and apprehensions of him: as, that he is a God

PART of love and benevolence towards mankind,
I. that he is a God of peace, of righteousness,
and of holiness. And lo, I say unto you,
that that person, be he jew or gentile, greek
or barbarian, if to such apprehensions of
God, he adds universal benevolence and love
to all men, if he loves them without distinc-
tion of persons, as his Creator loveth them,
who hath by an almighty decree caused the
sun and the rain to succour all the inhabi-
tants of the earth. But this cannot be done,
without ye repent of your former sins, the
unworthy apprehensions you had of the di-
vine Essence, the hatred ye bear one to an-
other. Repent ye of this, and embrace the
gospel, purify yourselves in thought and
action, be guilty of no immoral acts, for
this is contrary to the very nature and es-
sence of God, and the principle of universal
love. And behold, I say unto you, ye are
immortal, and if you purify yourselves,
even as ye ought to think that God is pure,
it shall come to pass, that ye shall be ad-
mitted into the kingdom of God. There-
fore to these principles, add, a hearty desire
of salvation. We may justly conclude, that
such principles as these, being spoke public-
ly

ly in a city, caused some words and disputings among the people. The subject matter of them was entirely new, and very surprising to those who had all along entertained quite the reverse : as might easily be demonstrated. Upon the publication of these doctrines, a vast company of the people of this city flocked about our Lord ; and, undoubtedly, they were a mixed multitude : some very ignorant, and others somewhat more knowing in the law and the prophets. Let us suppose some scribes or levites present, and these expecting the appearance of the Messiah ; and, let us suppose, that they, on this occasion, remembered that their prophets had said, in the days of the Messiah, the deaf shall hear, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the lame man shall leap as a hart. Upon this, after divers words, as we may suppose, passed between our Lord and these scribes and levites, they bring unto him a diseased man, an incurable, with no other design than to expose and ridicule the holy Jesus : they did not think that he would answer the character of the Messiah ; but they sought an opportunity to lay hold of him, and punish him for speaking against
their

PART their doctrines. This was the case: they
I. bring unto Christ, a man, who had been
grievously afflicted with a distemper many
years, and having brought him into the
midst of the people, and laid him before
Jesus, the scribes say unto him: Master,
we know that when Messias cometh, he will
cure all manner of distempers, according
to this prophecy: Then shall the deaf hear,
the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and
the lame man shall leap as an hart. Behold,
therefore, we have brought unto you a man
who hath been lame several years, he has
been pronounced incurable by all the phy-
sicians. Now, if you restore this man to his
natural strength which he had before this
distemper came on him, we will believe that
thou art the Christ, the Messiah whom we
expected should come into the world. And
when the scribes had ended, Jesus spake the
words of the gospel of the kingdom, the in-
curable being present. And having ended
speaking, he said unto the incurable: Be-
lievest thou that I can cure thee? and the
man said: Yea, Lord, I believe. [But what
was the reason of his belief? it was the glo-
rious gospel which he had heard.] Then Je-
sus

Jesus stooped before all the people, and took the man by the hand, and said unto him: Arise, and go to thy house. All the people, at least, five hundred, were eye-witnesses of this miracle. They saw that by his touch and word he was restored to his pristine health: they saw him walk, as well as they could; and needed not to be carried away, by the help of others, in the manner he was brought. The cure of this man astonished the whole multitude, silenced and confounded the scribes. Hereupon, many of the people forsake Jesus, and, with all speed, bring unto him, the lame, the diseased, and all the sick of their city, and he healed them in a miraculous manner, either by saying, I will be thou clean, or, Be thou whole, or, Arise and walk.

THE scribes, and bigotted jews, seeing the miracles which Jesus did, returned to their own houses abashed and confounded. They told him, they would believe on him, if he wrought a miraculous cure; but tho' they were convinced, by ocular demonstration, that he performed the act they required of him, they endeavoured to lessen his reputation,

PART reputation, by persuading the people, that
 I. he performed these wonderful works by a
 mysterious pronounciation of the name Je-
 hovah, called Tetragrammaton.

THE holy Jesus, having preached the gospel, and healed all the sick and diseased that were brought unto him, both in compassion to them as men, and as an evidence of the truth of his doctrine, leaves the city and goes into another preaching the gospel, and curing their invalids. And this he did in all the cities, towns and villages in *Galilee*,

Matth. iv. as we are informed by St. *Matthew*. “ And
 23. “ Jesus went about all *Galilee*, teaching in
 “ their synagogues, and preaching the go-
 “ spel of the kingdom, and healing all
 “ manner of sickness and diseases among
 “ the people.”

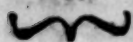
THE number healed the reader will, of course, judge to be very large ; and, consequently, that the witnesses of these miracles might be, at least, two thirds of the inhabitants of *Galilee*. So that there could not, at that time, be one person in *Galilee*, but what credited these miracles.

OUR

OUR evangelist says, that the fame of these miracles, and the doctrines he taught, was rumoured by the inhabitants of *Galilee* over other regions: he instances in that of *Syria*. And the *Syrians* were so fully persuaded of the truth of what the *Galileans* asserted, that they brought all their invalids, some a great many miles, to be healed by him. Many of the people of *Syria* might happen to be in *Galilee*, when our Lord performed these miracles and did actually see them done, who testified these things to their countrymen. And by this means, was the fame of Christ, as a preacher of a new doctrine, and a worker of miracles, spread through all *Syria*. In full confidence of relief for their distressed brethren, they bring out of *Syria* to our Lord, all their sick people that were taken with divers diseases, and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them. This is the account St. *Matthew* gives of the miracles our Saviour performed, upon the *Syrians*. The phrase, *brought unto him*, signifies two things. 1. The inability of

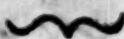
PART

I.



of these persons to come to him by their own natural strength. And, 2. That they brought them in vehicles, and that many of them were brought from places at a considerable distance from that where Christ then was. A particular subjoined, *and he healed them.* All those who desired it, and those in whose behalf it was desired.

WE may gather from this relation, thus stated, an undeniable truth: that when these invalids were returned to their several places of abode in *Syria*, the inhabitants saw the mighty works that Christ had wrought, (though they were not eye-witnesses of the very miracles which he wrought; yet) they certainly knew that these men were carried out of their several cities, some sick, some lame, some paralytic, &c. and did return perfectly cured, and in full strength and vigor: this they saw. To this add, the testimony of those on whom these miracles were wrought, and that of those who conveyed and accompanied them thither, who affirmed to every body, that these things were done by Jesus of *Nazareth*. Here the number of eye-witnesses and believers of Christ's

Christ's miracles, were greatly increased, CHAP.
and undoubtedly all people believed that he VIII.
was an extraordinary person. 

ST. *Matthew* next proceeds to tell us, that multitudes of people accompanied Jesus, that he went up on a mount and delivered the gospel to them in those words he has given us, in *Cb.* v, vi, vii. which last chapter he concludes thus: "And it came
" pass that when Jesus had ended these say-
" ings, the people were astonished at his
" doctrine. For he taught them as one
" having authority, and not as the scribes." And then at the beginning of his eighth chapter he has these words: "When he was
" come down from the mountain great
" multitudes followed him." Thus surrounded with spectators, "Behold, there
" came a leper and worshipped him, say-
" ing, Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make
" me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand
" and touched him, saying, I will be thou
" clean." The multitudes which followed Christ were the eye-witnesses of this miracle, among whom were the disciples. At the fifth verse of this chapter to the fourteenth
we

PART we have another well attested miracle recorded. It was this: A certain centurion in *Capernaum* comes to our Lord and beseeches him to heal his servant, who had the palsy. Jesus tells him, that he would come and heal him. He returns, that he was not worthy of that honour, assuring Christ he was verily persuaded, that if he spake but the word, his servant would be healed of his malady. Jesus, amazed at the faith of this centurion, declares to all present, that he had “not found so great faith, no not in “Israel.” Immediately, after he had said these words, he granted the centurion his petition, “Go thy way, and as thou hast “believed, so be it done unto thee. And “his servant was healed in the self-same “hour.” This centurion was a man of authority and note in *Capernaum*: and on that account well known. He had spared no cost to cure his servant, as appears by St. *Luke*, who says, his servant was dear unto him, and that notwithstanding this his sickness had brought him near to death: *he was sick and ready to die*, Luke vii. i. When the physicians had given him over, Jesus coming into that city, he requests his aid and assistance.

assistance. His request Christ granted. And several hearing our Lord grant it, hastened to the centurion's house, and found the servant whole that had been sick : *i. e.* they found him restored to full strength and vigour, whom they knew was a few hours before in a state of death, *Luke vii. 10.* The persons who knew this fact, were the centurion, his wife, and his family, the servant healed ; besides divers elders, the whole company of soldiers, and several friends and neighbours of this great man's. All these knew that he was sick and ready to die ; and all these saw that he was healed, and that instantly. Here then to evidence the truth of this miracle, there were a great number of witnesses, credible persons.

THE cure of *Peter's* wife's mother is the next miracle recorded by St. *Matthew* to *Matth. viii. 14, 15.* have been wrought by Christ. *Peter* was a disciple of Christ's. St. *Mark* says, *Mark i. 29—31.* " And when they were come forth out of " the synagogue, they entred into the house " of Simon and Andrew, with James and " John. But *Peter's* wife's mother lay " sick of a fever, anon they tell him of her.

Y

" And

PART “ And he came and took her by the hand,

I. “ and lift her up ; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministred unto

“ them.” The evidences of this act were

Simon and *Andrew*, *James* and *John*, and

though they are not mentioned, domestics

and acquaintance, neighbours and friends.

St. *Luke* records this miracle, *Ch.* iv. 38.

In the evening of the same day, on which

he cured this woman of her fever, he

healed all the invalids, the inhabitants of

Matth.viii. *Capernaum* brought unto him. “ When
16.

“ (*says St. Matthew*) the even was come,

“ they brought unto him many that were

“ possessed with devils: and he cast out

“ the spirits with his word, and healed all

“ that were sick.” In this sense, our histo-

Ver. 17. rian tells us, that Christ took our infirmi-

ties, and bore our sicknesses, as was spoken

by the prophet *Isaias*.

AFTER this, our Lord departed from *Ca-*

pernaum by ship, and being in a storm works

Ver. 26. a wonder. “ He rebuked (*says our author*)

“ the winds and the sea, and there was a

“ great calm.” This is recorded by St.

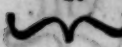
Mark, *Ch.* iv. 39, &c. by St. *Luke*, *Ch.*

viii.

viii. 23, &c. When he had passed over the sea to the country of the *Gergesenes*, he performed a miracle on two men possessed with devils. This is recorded by *St. Mark* and *St. Luke*. When our Lord had performed this miracle, he leaves the *Gergesenes*, and crosses the sea to his own city : which he had no sooner entred, but a vast throng of people encompass the house wherein he was. For the fame of him, and his mighty works, excited the people to flock about him, out of curiosity to see and hear him speak. And here it may be remarked, that this great physician, did not enquire of the people for their sick, nor boastingly tell them, that if they would bring their infirm, he would cure them. No ; far from such ostentation. When he saw the multitudes of the people that were gathered together in the house and before the house, he takes this opportunity of preaching, or instructing them in the gospel of the kingdom. He let slip no opportunity he had to teach and instruct men in his glorious principles of redemption ; but he never sought to amaze mankind by signs and wonders. He never asked the people for their sick that he might

PART

I.



cure them: nor did he ever refuse to cure them when asked so to do. And now, while he was thus employed in declaring new doctrines to the multitude, four men bring unto him a man sick of the palsy. But the throng of people being so great that they could not come nigh him, they found means to get him up upon the house where Jesus was, and having taken off the roof, they carefully let the man down upon his couch, and laid him before Jesus. Our blessed Lord seeing the pains they had took, accompanied undoubtedly with the hearty desires of the paralytic for the cure, kindly stiles him, by reason of his great faith, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” And he said to him, “Arise, take up thy bed, and go thy way into thy house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all.” They saw the man, before helpless, now able to carry his bed. A sufficient demonstration of a perfect cure wrought upon him. Nay, they were astonished at this wonderful work, and said among themselves, “we never saw it on this fashion;” *i. e.* we have seen this man perform many cures among the people, but we never

Matth. ix.
2.

Mark ii.
11, 12.

never saw so great a miracle as this before; CHAP. VIII.
 for, behold, he, who some minutes ago, was in a desperate case, is so restored to strength and vigor, that he is able not only to walk, but to give this mark of his entire sanity, by carrying so great a burden as his bed. Among the spectators of this miracle, *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark* says, were scribes. And *St. Luke*, that there were pharisees as well as scribes, *Luke* v. 21. These were men of learning, and not easily to be deceived. And who did return to their own houses full of amazement, and report, that they had seen strange things that day, *Luke* v. 26.

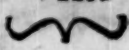
OUR historian, *Matthew*, Ch. ix. 20, 21, 22, records an extraordinary miracle performed on a woman, who through faith touched the hem of our Lord's garment, and was thereby cured of an issue of blood, with which she had been diseased twelve years. Her faith was very extraordinary. *St. Mark* says, that this woman had been diseased with this issue of blood twelve years, *Mark* v. 25, &c. and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and

PART was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.

I. Yet, notwithstanding this, Jesus coming that way, and she having heard of the many miracles Jesus had wrought, was fully persuaded in herself, that if she could but attain to touch the hem of his garment, she should be made whole. In full confidence of success, she came into the throng which followed Jesus, and behind him, touched his garment. “ And straightway the fountain “ of her blood was dried up: and she felt in “ her body that she was healed of that “ plague.” The multitude, nor any single person, besides the woman and Jesus were sensible of the miracle wrought. No person, before this woman, had been cured after this surprizing manner; therefore our Lord did not let it pass for two reasons: 1. To shew the extraordinary faith of the woman. And, 2. To demonstrate to all men that he was the Christ the Son of God, and the Being whose principles they ought to imbibe. And therefore he “ turned him “ about in the press, and said, Who touch- “ ed my clothes? And his disciples said un- “ to him, Thou seest the people thronging “ thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? “ And

Ver. 29.

30-34.

“ And he looked round about to see her C H A P.
 “ that had done this thing. But the woman VIII.
 “ fearing and trembling, knowing what 
 “ was done in her, came and fell down be-
 “ fore him, and told him all the truth.
 “ And he said unto her, Daughter, thy
 “ faith hath made thee whole; go in peace,
 “ and be whole of thy plague.” The wit-
 nesses of this miracle, were the disciples,
Jairus in particular, and a vast press of
 people.

WE pass on to the next miracle related
 by *St. Matthew*, which is that of the raising Matth. ix.
 of *Jairus's* daughter. Our evangelist hints,
 that this was done in a short time after our
 Lord returned from the country of the *Ger-*
gesenes. This *Jairus* was an inhabitant of
Capernaum, a city on the lake of *Gennesa-*
retb, a man of note, being one of the rulers
 of the synagogue. It seems there was among
 the jews two sanhedrims, the greater and
 the lesser. The greater consistory or sanhe-
 drim was seventy two, selected out of all the
 people of the jews, made up of the chief
 priests and elders, and often called, the
 scribes or elders of *Israel*. These always

PART met in *Jerusalem*. The lesser sanhedrim or
 I. consistory were made up of twenty-three
 judges, who were chose out of the principal
 men in every city, and were stiled rulers:
 and every city had twenty-three of these ru-
 lers: and such a ruler was *Jairus*. This
 ruler had a daughter who fell sick, he spared
 no cost to get her cured by the physicians,
 for he loved her, not any thing that could
 be done for her recovery was wanting; for
 he was a rich man: but all in vain. The
 physicians and her friends gave her over for
 dead. But *Jairus* hearing that Jesus was
 come over from the country of the *Gerge-
 senes* to that city, *Capernaum*, and hearing
 of the mighty things which he had wrought,
 was confident in himself that if he could
 prevail with the holy Jesus, (though he
 then concluded that his daughter was even
 dead,) to come and lay his hand upon her,
 she would live. Prompted thus, *Jairus* ha-
 stens to find Jesus, who that day was invited
 to dinner with *Matthew* the publican. This
Matthew is our evangelist: he being called
 by our Lord to be a coadjutor with him in
 preaching the gospel of the kingdom, makes
 a feast, and invites Jesus, the publicans of
 that

that city, and some others, and, as may be supposed, at this time, resigned the office of toll-gatherer or publican. Which might be the reason of the feast. Publicans were generally heathens, if not, they were creatures of *Rome*, gatherers and exactors of the roman tribute; and on that account hateful to the jewish people, accounted the worst of men, and always ranked with sinners. Our Lord was a Man of an unblemished character, holy life, and pious conversation, this encomium was allowed to be his due by all men: as likewise, that he was a man who had performed such wonders as never man did. The fame of which, caused people to flock about our Lord, wherever he came. Accordingly, while our Lord was at dinner with *Matthew* in his house, a mixed multitude gather about it: some were of the sect of the pharisees. These recollecting the holiness of Jesus, and the great character which was his due, murmur and whisper against our Lord, even to his disciples, and say, “Why eateth your
Ver. 11.
“Master with publicans and sinners? For so they looked upon the gatherers of the roman tax, and the common people: the
first

PART first they stiled publicans, the latter sinners.

I. The subject of the pharisees murmuring being told Jesus, he expostulates with them, and proves, that their murmurs were spiteful, at least, unreasonable.

WHILE this happened between the blessed Jesus and the proud pharisees, *Jairus* finds him, and in a petitioning manner humbly desires him to come and heal his daughter, who was now at the point of death. St. *Matthew*

Ver. 18. says, that he said to Christ, "My daughter
" is even now dead, but come thou, and
" lay thy hand upon her, and she shall
" live." No sooner had our Lord heard

Ver. 19. him, but he grants his petition. "And
" Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did
" his disciples." The strength of *Jairus's* faith excited our Lord's compassion, who was as ready to grant these favours, as the people were to ask them. He immediately quits the company he was in, and hastens to the house of *Jairus*. His disciples were either at the feast, or waiting without among the people: be it the one or the other, it is very certain, they heard what *Jairus* said, and were perfectly acquainted with the sub-
ject

ject of his petition : or, it is likely, they presented it to our Lord in behalf of *Jairus*, upon his request, they being nearer to our Lord, than he could come. But not to insist upon this : they undoubtedly heard the words that *Jairus* said, and especially observed, that he represented his daughter as already dead, and many others then present in the house heard it : and we may presume, that the subject of *Jairus's* request was known to several without the house.

I TAKE this miracle to be the first of this sort as our Lord wrought, I mean, that this virgin, was the first person that Christ raised from the dead. *Jairus* tells our Lord, that his *daughter was even then dead*, at the time he first spoke to him. Now Christ had never wrought such a miracle as was requisite in this case : He had healed the sick, restored the blind to their sight, and made the lame walk ; but he had never raised one really dead to life again : this his disciples knew. Jesus undertaking to perform so mighty a work, by immediately rising up, and quitting the company, the disciples follow him, in curiosity to see this wonderful act ; and
besides

PART besides the disciples, divers people accompanied our Lord with *Jairus*: they were so many, that both *Mark* and *Luke* say, they

Mark v. 24.
Luke viii.
43.

I. thronged him. Undoubtedly, the multitude increased as they passed from *Matthew's* to *Jairus's* house.: and some might enquire, Why *Jairus* was with Jesus? and being told the matter, the multitude increased, and this might be the reason why the people thronged about the Lord of life. Thus attended a woman presses into the throng, and by touching Christ's garment is healed of a long and obstinate disease. On which occasion he stopped for a considerable time, and while he was speaking to the woman, *St. Mark* and *St. Luke* say, that certain persons came from the ruler's house, and corroborate what he had before told Jesus, telling him, that his daughter was really dead; and desire him, that he would not trouble Jesus to come any farther. These persons thought that it was to no purpose, for Jesus to come to the damsel after she was dead. They certainly accounted the act of raising a person from death to life, not in the power of Christ to perform. But Jesus saith to *Jairus*, "Be not afraid, but believe." *St. Luke* says, that

that he said to him : " Fear not, and she
" shall be made whole." The ruler belie-
ved, and the multitude was silenced by this
saying of our Lord ; though astonished and
surprized at it. By the time Jesus reached
Jairus's house, the damsel had been dead
some time : for we are told by St. *Matthew*,
that when Jesus was come, the minstrels and
the people were in the house making a great
noise. St. *Mark* says, that when Jesus came,
a great tumult, and them that weep greatly
were in and about the house. The friends of
the virgin were sure she was dead. It is cer-
tain, they stayed some time to see if it was
really so, before they dismissed the servants
to acquaint *Jairus* with the unwelcome news.
After this they sent for the minstrels, who
were a while in coming. And when come
and begun their lamentation, there was some
time for the gathering of the tumult about
the house, which *Jairus*, Jesus and the mul-
titude found upon their coming. It follows,
that when our Lord came, there was no life
in the virgin, and that she had been dead a
considerable time. Jesus spent still some
time in clearing the house of the minstrels,
and in telling them, that the *maid was not*
dead,

Luke viii.
50.

Matth. ix.
23.

Mark v. 38.

Ver. 39.

PART *dead, but sleepeth.* The minstrels and others,
 I. not understanding our Lord's modest expres-
 sion, and knowing that the maid was really
 dead, laugh at and ridicule the holy Jesus.

He having cleared the house of this lament-
 ing set of men, spent still more time in
 Luke viii. bidding *James, Peter and John, Jairus* and
 51. his wife, attend him in the room where the
 virgin lay dead. These five were spectators

and eye-witnesses of the awful action Christ
 was then about to perform. Their eyes be-
 ing stedfast to see the event, the holy Jesus
 took the damsel by her hand, and said unto
 Ver. 54. her, "Maid, arise." And immediately
 her soul obeyed the voice of its creator, and
 returned, and she arose straightway. Our
 Lord having performed this stupendous mi-
 racle to the great astonishment of his disci-
 ples and the parents of the damsel, charged
 them that they should tell no man what was
 done. O the humility of the blessed Jesus!
 And O how great and beneficent his divine
 actions! How willing is he to conceal the
 mighty work he had done! But notwith-

Ver. 56. standing this, St. *Matthew* tells us, that "the
 fame of it went out into all the land."
 Jesus returned with his disciples to the house
 of

of *Matthew* or *Simon*. The people, seeing Christ depart, enquired, whether he had performed the miracle *Jairus* requested. They knew very well, that the damsel was dead. The sending for the minstrels was an evident sign of it. These waited without the door, expecting to be called to begin their lamentations afresh. They assured the people, that the damsel was really dead. These minstrels, after Jesus's departure, may be supposed to have desired entrance, thinking that she remained in the same case, as Jesus found her. In this sentiment, the minstrels were not singular, many believed that Christ could heal all manner of diseases among the people; but they did not believe, that he could restore one to life, who was really dead. The friends and servants of *Jairus* (and even *Jairus* himself) doubted, whether Jesus could raise a person from the dead. The people therefore (particularly the minstrels) did insist upon a solution of this question, before they departed *Jairus*'s house: Is the damsel dead or alive? The natural curiosity of the people led them to make such an enquiry, for they had both seen and heard the wonderful and astonishing things that

PART that Jesus had performed. Our Lord,
 I. when he had raised the damsel from the
 dead, charged *Jairus* and his wife, that
 they should tell it no man. It is easy to
 conceive, that this command bore a great
 weight with them, when we consider, that
Jairus and his wife were astonished at the
 mighty work which Jesus had wrought. The
 minstrels especially urge for a reply to their
 question: the parents of the virgin desire
 them to depart, without granting their re-
 quest. They earnestly beg and importune
Jairus to be admitted to see his daughter.
 At length, *Jairus* and his wife knowing,
 that the miracle wrought on their daughter
 could not long be kept a secret, evaded our
 Lord's command after this manner. They
 let the minstrels come into the house and see
 the damsel: for Jesus had said, *Tell no man
 what was done: not, Let no person see the
 damsel, or the miracle wrought on her.* Then
 these men saw the damsel, who they knew
 had been really dead, now in full strength
 and vigour. Which they testified to the
 people without the house, and, it is certain,
 all the neighbours, if none of the multitude,
 were admitted to see the virgin; but parti-
 cularly

cularly all those who knew she was dead. The multitude leave the house, and in every part of the city declare the wonderful work that was done. Upon which report, divers persons resorted to *Jairus* to know the truth of this fact. And thus the fame of it went out into all that land.

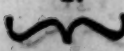
JESUS having left *Jairus* was returning, probably to *Matthew's* house. In his way thither, two blind men, understanding that Christ was passing by, humbly implore his aid and assistance, crying and saying, "Thou son of David, have mercy upon us." In company with the holy Jesus, were his disciples and much people followed them. The friends or acquaintance of the two blind men led them to the house where Jesus was. And he touched their eyes, and they received their sight. And although Jesus charged them to tell the miracle wrought on them to no man, yet our historian informs us, that "when they were departed, they spread abroad his fame in all that country."

Soon after this, Christ healed a dæmoniac. Our evangelist, having recorded this

Z

act,

PART act, fums up the many cures which Jesus miraculously wrought among the people in this

I.  diction, “ And Jesus went about all the
Ver. 35. “ cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the
“ kingdom, and healing every sickness, and
“ every disease among the people.” Had the evangelist given us a particular account of the persons cured, and the circumstances of the facts, I conclude, that it would have made his short gospel, the largest work now extant in the world. But this, as it could be no satisfaction to reasonable beings, beyond what we really have now, so the omission is perfectly agreeable to the strictest prudence and discretion. It would have been tedious to the reader, and no way profitable ; as might be easily shewn.

It was a constant custom with our Lord on the sabbath-day to go into a synagogue, and preach and declare to all present, the glad tidings of the redemption, to reason there, and inculcate those principles which are available to salvation. The jews were strict and superstitious observers of the sabbath, and held that it was not lawful to do
any

any good work or labour thereon. To re-
 prove this absurd notion, Christ works a
 miracle to declare that acts of beneficence
 and charity, goodness and piety, are to be
 performed on all days alike. There was
 present in the synagogue a man who had
 his hand withered, and Jesus said unto him,
 "Stretch forth thy hand, and he stretched
 "it forth, and it was restored whole, like
 "as the other." This was done before a
 great number of people, among whom were
 some of the sect of the pharisees, and these,
 for profaning the sabbath, seek the life of
 our Saviour. So that it seems, it was the
 ridiculous opinion of these men, that acts of
 compassion and real service to mankind
 ought not to be done on the sabbath.

Matth. xii.

13.

UPON this, our Lord leaves the syna-
 gogue, attended with great multitudes of
 people, who instantly bring unto him all
 their sick and lame, and all their diseased,
 and he healed them all. Likewise, they
 brought unto him a blind and dumb man,
 and he healed him. And all the people that
 were present, who saw these mighty works,
 were astonished and said, "Is not this the

Mark iii.

10.

Luke vi.

18, 19.

Matth. xii.

PART “son of David?” *i. e.* Is not this he whom
 I. we have expected would come? Is not this he
 whom we should look upon as the restorer
 of *Israel*, who was to be of the seed of *Da-*
vid? It is natural to conceive, that when
 the people saw the man who had the wither-
 ed hand, restored to the perfect use of it,
 that they should be excited thereby to bring
 unto Christ all the invalids of their neigh-
 bourhood. This, I say, is but a natural
 conclusion, and what all mankind would
 do, if it were their case.

At another time, our Lord having re-
 tired into a desert place, because of *Herod*
 the tetrarch, the people, hearing of it, bring
 unto him all their sick, and he had compas-
 sion on them, and he healed them. And
 they continued in the desert till it was late in
 the evening, and the disciples desired Je-
 sus to send the multitude away. But ma-
 ny of them having come from far, and
 had eaten nothing that day, he worked a
 miracle in their behalf, and fed five thou-
 sand men, besides women and children, with
 five loaves and two fishes; and though the
 quantity was so small, yet the fragments that
 remained

remained filled twelve baskets. Thus the holy Jesus having healed their sick, and fed them plenteously, dismisses them. CHAP. VIII.

AFTER this, he came into the land *Gen-nesaret*. No sooner was it rumoured, that Christ was come into that place, but the people busy themselves in sending for all the diseased in the country round about, and bring them to him to be healed. And so great an opinion had they of him, that they only desired, that their invalids might touch the hem of his garment. This the Lord of life granted, "And as many as touched, Ver. 36. " were made perfectly whole."

IN a short time after this, our Lord departed from this place, and went towards *Tyre* and *Sidon*, where he grants the petition of a woman of *Canaan*, and cures her daughter at a great distance. And then departed from thence, and went up into a mountain near the sea of *Galilee*, where he healed many, even as many as they brought unto him, that were dumb, lame, blind, maimed, &c. And vast multiudes being gathered together, our Lord feeds them miraculously, — xv. 28.

PART raculously, because some of them, at least,

I. had been with him three days, and therefore he had compassion on them, and did
 32-39. not send them away fasting, lest they should faint by the way. Having fed them, he dismissed them, and then took ship, and came to *Magdala* : here he preached the go-

— xvi. 13. spel. And then came to *Cesarea Philippi*, and after his transfiguration on the mount, he heals a lunatick, at the request of his father, before the whole multitude, who were
 — xvii. 1-18. waiting his descent from the mountain,

OUR evangelist records another miracle wrought by Christ in his payment of the tribute-money, *Matth. xvii. 24-27*. The cure of two blind men in his way to *Jerusalem*, before all the people, *Ch. xx. 30-34*.

ST. *Luke* relates a miracle wrought on a widow's son at *Nain*. Our Lord, attended with much people, came to the gate of this
 Luke vii. city, and, " Behold, there was a dead man
 12-17. " carried out, the only son of his mother,
 " and she was a widow : and much people
 " of the city was with her. And when the
 " Lord saw her, he had compassion on her,
 " and

“ and said unto her, Weep not. And he
 “ came and touched the bier, (and they
 “ that bare him stood still) and he said,
 “ Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And
 “ he that was dead, sat up, and began to
 “ speak : and he delivered him to his mo-
 “ ther. And there came a fear on all : and
 “ they glorified God, saying, That a great
 “ prophet is risen up among us, and, that
 “ God hath visited his people. And this
 “ rumour of him went forth throughout all
 “ Judea, and the regions round about.”

IN this story are several remarkable cir-
 cumstantials : as, 1. That a vast multitude
 of people followed Christ. 2. Coming to
Nain, he casually meets a dead corpse at-
 tended with much people of *Nain*. 3. The
 person dead, the only son of his mother, and
 she was a widow. 4. The sorrow of his
 mother on this occasion, our Lord takes no-
 tice of. 5. The widow, no doubt, relates her
 grievance, and Christ has compassion on her.
 6. The multitude of people observed the
 actions of the blessed Jesus. 7. He touched
 the bier, and said audibly, *Young man, I*
say unto thee, Arise. 8. The act accomplish-
 ed,

PART ed, the dead man raised to life, and given to

I. his mother. *Lastly*, The great amazement and admiration of the people, and the fame which spread itself through *Judea*, and the region all about.

ST. *John* in his gospel records a stupendous miracle wrought by Christ on *Lazarus*, as he was in his journey to *Jerusalem*. This man had two sisters, he being sick, they sent messengers to Jesus, who was then beyond *Jordan*, to acquaint him with the ill state of their brother, and intreated him to come to *Bethany*, to heal his friend *Lazarus*. But notwithstanding this, Jesus stayed in *Galilee* two days; on the third day Jesus resolves to go into *Judea*, and gives his disciples this reason for it, "Our friend *Lazarus* sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said the disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, *Lazarus* is dead." They finding our Lord resolute in going, *Didymus* says, to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." From these words, and their question at the 8th verse, it may be surmised,

John xi.
11.

Ver. 12.

Ver. 14.

Ver. 16.

sed, that the disciples expected the jews CHAP.
would kill both them and their Master. VIII.

However, the holy Jesus lets not slip this opportunity of exercising his power in testifying the truth of the gospel he had preached. He, accompanied with his disciples, goes into *Judea*, and comes unto *Bethany*. When he came, he found that *Lazarus* had lain in the grave four days. At this time *Martha* and *Mary* were entertaining many jews who were come, some, or all of them from *Jerusalem*, to comfort them concerning their brother. But *Martha*, hearing that Jesus was near the town, went forth to meet him, but *Mary* stayed with her acquaintance in the house. *Martha* tells Jesus, that her brother was dead. Jesus assures her, that he should arise again. After Ver. 23. this, and some other discourse, she returns to *Mary*, and tells her, that Jesus was come, and that he wanted to see her. *Mary* immediately quits her company, and goes out, and meets Jesus in the place where *Martha* had left him, which was without the town. The jews seeing *Mary* go out of the house in great haste, follow her, thinking that she was going to the grave to weep there, according

PART cording to a custom which was then among
 I. the jews, for the nearest relations to go and
 lament at the graves and tombs of their de-
 parted friends. *Mary*, accompanied by the
 jews, comes to *Jesus*: they all lament the
 loss of their friend *Lazarus*. *Jesus* then de-
 mands where he was buried: *Mary* and the
 jews conduct our Lord and his disciples to
 the grave. When he was come he ordered
 the stone to be taken from the mouth of the
 cave. But *Martha* affirmed, that that was
 to no purpose, because her brother had been
 dead four days, and certainly stank. The
 stone being removed, our Lord, to satisfy
 the spectators that it was he that performed
 this act, spake with a loud voice, and said,
 Ver. 43. "Lazarus come forth." At his command,
Lazarus came forth, in the presence of his
 two sisters, our Lord's disciples, and a great
 company of the jews, bound hand and foot
 with grave-clothes, and his face covered with
 Ver. 44. a napkin. *Jesus* saith unto them, "Loose
 him, and let him go." *Lazarus* being
 thus raised from death to life again, return-
 ed in company with his sisters, the jews,
 (and perhaps our Lord and his disciples) to
 his own house. All present were thorough-
 ly

ly convinced of the reality of this miracle, and all the inhabitants of *Bethany* knew that *Lazarus* had been dead and buried four days, and saw that this *Lazarus* was restored to full strength and vigor. The persons who saw this act, related who was the performer of it. So that it follows, there could not be a person in *Bethany*, but what credited this fact. Nay, so fully convinced of its truth, were many of the jews, who were spectators of it, that they believed on Jesus. None questioned its reality, though some of those jews that were with *Mary*, went to the pharisees at *Jerusalem*, and told them the things that Jesus had done. These believed that this was a real miracle, they relate it as such to the pharisees, they assured them of the truth of it, and told them that they were eye-witnesses of it. The pharisees crediting what these jews affirmed, here-upon called a council. When met, the fact was rehearsed, and it is likely, several besides this of *Lazarus*, as appears from the words of their consultation, “What do we? for Ver. 47.
“this man doth MANY MIRACLES.” They do not question the truth of our Lord’s miracles. They really affirm, that it did appear

PART I. appear upon credible witness and testimony, that the miracles of Jesus, were real matters of fact. They therefore of the jewish council was apprehensive, that the pretensions of this Man to the Messiahship of the jews, would expose them to the *Romans*, who, if he should attempt an insurrection, would come and take away their place and nation. Upon this, *Caiaphas*, one of the council, high priest at this time, declares it as his opinion, that it was better to destroy this Jesus of *Nazareth*, than to expose the whole body of the jewish people to the fury of the *Romans*; for herein there could die but one man, but the other would be the occasion of the death of thousands, besides the utter extirpation of our place and nation. Having debated the matter, they resolve, that Jesus should be put to death. Their principal reason, why they assembled, appears to be on occasion of Christ's raising *Lazarus*. They may certainly be thought to credit this miracle. Their assembly and consultation, is an indisputable evidence of it. For this act they seek to put him to death. They having agreed *nemine contradicente*, that our Lord should die; next, under penalty

nalty of their displeasure, command all men to discover and apprehend Jesus, and bring him to them, or to give them notice, that they might send their officers and take him. Jesus knew that they had decreed his death, and that they had commanded all men to discover him, he therefore did no more miracles in *Judea*, but retired privately to a city called *Ephraim*, near the wilderness, and there staid till the passover. But our Lord came to *Bethany* six days before the approaching festival. In this journey, St. *Matthew* says, he told his disciples, that the scribes and pharisees would kill him, and that he would rise again on the third day. Upon this mention of his resurrection, which they concluded would be the crisis of time in which he would assume the character of a great and temporal prince, the mother of *James* and *John* desires of Christ, that these her two sons might be the prime ministers of his kingdom. Coming to *Bethany*, he was entertained and lodged in the house of *Lazarus*. The jews in *Jerusalem* hearing that Jesus was coming up to the feast, they being come themselves from distant parts of *Judea*, and hearing of this miracle, which had

PART had made a great stir in *Jerusalem*, they
I. come to *Bethany* to see Jesus, and particularly to see *Lazarus*, who had been raised from the dead by him. *Lazarus* testified the fact, so did his friends and all the inhabitants of *Bethany*. The testimony of this fact was so strong, that many of those jews believed on him. They believed it on the credit of *Lazarus* in particular; and this occasioned their belief that Jesus was the Person they expected at that time. Upon this, the chief priests assemble, and they consult to put *Lazarus* to death, as well as Jesus. But who were these men that went to see *Lazarus* and Jesus? They were a mixed multitude, pharisees, scribes and elders; but the majority were the common people. The first were chiefly malicious, and though they had reason and evidence sufficient to determine their belief of this miracle, they however would not own their conviction: but some of these and the commonalty, which were now got together in *Bethany*, believed it, and concluded, that this Jesus of *Nazareth* must be the very person of whom they had great and exalted expectations. It was in credit of this awful action that the multitude, upon our
Lord's

Lord's setting out from *Bethany* for *Jerusalem*, brake down the branches of palm-trees, and met him, and cried, "Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord." The jews then in *Jerusalem*, who had seen the miracle which Jesus wrought in raising *Lazarus* at *Bethany*, testified the fact. The people crediting the testimony of these eye-witnesses, leave the city to meet the holy Jesus, and stile him their king. The reason why they go out to meet him, and give him this title, is, because they had heard he had raised *Lazarus* to life, who had been dead four days: and because they expected that this miracle was an intimation that he would at the ensuing festival, publicly and openly assume the character of the Messiah, and declare himself the king of the jews, and require that they would aid and assist him in his pretensions, that he might overcome the roman power, and seat himself on the throne of *David*, his father: with such ideas they flocked about Jesus. It is plain, the occasion of these ideas was our Lord's raising of *Lazarus*: this act, and others, caused their hosanna's. The multitudes who flocked to Jesus,

Luke xii.
13.

PART Jesus, on the credit of this miracle, were
 I. so great, that the pharisees said one to another, “ Perceive ye, how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.”
 Ver. 19.

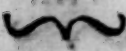
I think we may fairly conclude from these words, that the numbers of people who continually went from *Jerusalem* to *Bethany* to see *Lazarus* and Jesus were very great, and particularly, that great multitudes came with him from *Bethany* to *Jerusalem*. When he had entered the city, thus attended, he went into the temple, and there cured the blind, the lame, and others of their infirmities. The people increasing in the belief of *Lazarus*’s resurrection, by seeing these mighty works, became, as it were, one disciple to this glorious Being. Among which were certain *Greeks*, who were come up to worship at the feast. These desired of *Philip* that they might be brought to Jesus. It is probable, one of these men was acquainted with *Philip*. *Philip* tells *Andrew*, and so they were admitted. Our Lord discourses with them, and tells them of his death figuratively. Nor did the common people only credit this miracle, but certain of the great men of the jews; but they did
 not

not confess Christ, because they feared disgrace. But certainly, these rulers would, if they had found him declare for a temporal kingdom, openly have espoused his cause. Upon the credit of this miracle, they still pursue Jesus, and he having finished his preaching of the gospel of his kingdom, and taken his last farewell of his disciples, crosses the brook *Cedron* into a garden called *Getsemane*: here *Judas* betrays Christ to the jews.

THE next miracle recorded by *St. Matthew*, and the other three evangelists, which our Lord wrought, was the resurrection of his own body. A miracle the most stupendous and amazing, and certainly must be accounted the greatest that ever God the Son performed, or equal with his supernatural assumption of our nature. As that was a glorious instance of his divinity, so this was no less. As that declared him the Being whose doctrines we ought to imbibe, so the miracle of his resurrection justifies us in following his principles, and in believing him to be the very Son of God.

PART

I.

 JESUS when he was in his journey towards *Jerusalem*, tells his disciples, that he should be put to death, and that on the third day he should rise again. *Jerusalem* was the most populous city in *Judea*, and therefore the most proper for this great event. After he had been some time here, he instituted his last supper, and that evening went into a place called *Gethsemane*: *Judas* informs the chief priests and elders that he was there, and that he would deliver him unto them. They give him for this thirty pieces of silver. *Caiaphas* sends, under command of a centurion, conducted by *Judas*, divers persons to seize and bring with them Jesus of *Nazareth*. They take Jesus, and bring him before *Caiaphas*, and the jewish sanhedrim, which were already assembled at the high priest's house. These seek false witnesses against our Lord, and having suborned them, one said this, and another that: but their general charge was blasphemy. He was kept this evening in the high priest's house: and in the morning the council being met, they consulted how they might put Jesus to death. But they not having

ving the power of life and death given to them by the roman laws, they led him away bound to *Pontius Pilate*, the roman governor of *Judea*. *Pilate* immediately asks him, "Art thou the king of the jews? Jesus said Mat. xxvii, "unto him, Thou sayest it." This having^{11.} passed, the sanhedrim produce their accusations against Jesus before *Pilate*. Our Lord took no notice of them. *Pilate* therefore said, "Hearest thou not how many things they Ver. 13. "witness against thee? But Jesus answered Ver. 14. "him to never a word." *Pilate* surprized at his silence, and perceiving the innocence of the holy Jesus, proposes, by reason of the approaching festival, to deliver unto them Jesus, or *Barrabbas*, to be put to death. They chuse Jesus. *Pilate* then tells them, that he apprehended no fault in Jesus. But the sanhedrim and the people raise a great tumult, and *Pilate* finding he could not prevail with them, he took water and washed his hands, and said to them all, "I Ver. 24. "am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it." The multitude readily answered, "His blood be on us, Ver. 25. "and on our children." *Pilate* delivered Jesus to them to be crucified. This he did

A A 2 against

PART against the dictates of his own mind ; he
I. knew that the accusation they brought was
 nothing but calumny and malice.

IN this sentence *Pilate* acted quite contrary to the custom of his office. He condemned him to present execution : which was contrary to a law of the senate of *Rome*, made twelve years before that time, which decreed, That no person should be executed till ten days after sentence.

PILATE having delivered *Jesus* to a band of roman soldiers, they first mock him, and then led him forth to crucifixion. Multitudes of the people flock along with them to the place of execution, which the jews call *Golgotha*, a place of a scull.

THEY having prepared every thing in order to crucify our Lord, they strip him naked, and nail him to the cross, and then erected the cross, which by its fall to the ground, tortured his sacred body, which rested on no more than four nails, viz. one in each hand, and one in each foot.

THE band of soldiers stayed and watched Jesus. *Pilate* put on the cross an inscription in *Hebrew*, *Greek* and *Latin*, "This is Jesus the King of the jews." The centurion and his band, who before had reviled and mocked Jesus, when they saw the great darkness, and the earthquake, they said one to another, "Truly, this was the Son of God." So soon were their notes changed; but yet, though amazed, they did not believe. This truth was extorted from them.

Ver. 37.

Ver. 54.

OUR Lord being dead, *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, having begged his body of *Pilate* the roman procurator, takes it, by his permission, down from the cross, and wrapping it in a clean linnen-cloth, he laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out of a rock, and having secured the entrance with a great stone, he went his way.

ON the next day certain members of the sanhedrim, (chief priests, and pharisees) resort to *Pilate's* palace, and desire of him,

PART that he would secure the sepulchre, send a

I. band of soldiers to watch it, and to seal the stone. For which they give him these two reasons: 1. That Christ said, when he was alive, That after three days he would rise again. 2. Lest, say they, his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say, He is risen from the dead. And so our intention in putting him to death as a deceiver, be entirely frustrated.

PILATE granted their request. And they went and made the sepulchre secure, sealed the stone, and set a watch, hoping to prove Christ a deceiver. But as he had said, on the third day he arose. The watch or soldiers were witnesses of his resurrection. They told the wonderful event to the chief priests: they affirmed it was really truth that he was risen. They credit their relation of this wonderful event, and think proper to call a council upon it, to find means to stifle the report. They give therefore to these soldiers great sums of money to say, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. However, these men were eye-witnesses of our Lord's resurrection.

rection. They saw the stone rolled away, and saw him come forth alive. They were greatly astonished at it, in so much, that they confessed, they were as dead men. It was a most surprizing sight, to see a mere Man, (as they accounted him) whom they were sure was dead, come forth out of the sepulchre of his own accord! It is true, they had heard he had said, he would rise again on the third day, but they did not believe it: they looked upon it as a vain boast. They flattered themselves, that they should disappoint his disciples, and detect the imposture. Amidst such thoughts as these, the almighty Logos, God eternal, to whom nothing was impossible, did now resume his body as miraculously as he took it in the womb of a pure virgin, and by his almighty power broke forth from his grave, to the great amazement of these soldiers. I must take notice, that the act of bribery in the sanhedrim, is an evidence of the force of the testimony of these men. They conceived that their relation would avail with the people. They think it true, first see them, and then add a threatning of concealment. If this act of bribery, or a true relation of the

PART fact, reach the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. Soldiers love money. They took the money, and did as they were taught. After our Lord was risen, on the same day, he came to his disciples and saluted them thus: "Peace be unto you." And then shewed them, that they might be sure that he was really risen with the same body as was crucified, and to demonstrate that he was Jesus, the holes the nails had made in his hands and feet, and that in his side made by a soldier when he was on the cross. But *Thomas* was not present among the disciples at this time. The disciples then were eye-witnesses of his resurrection. They were glad to see their Master, and tell it to *Thomas*: but, notwithstanding they affirmed they had seen the holes in his hands and feet, and that in his side, and besides, they knew that it was Christ, he would not believe it; but declares, that except he could see in his hands the print of the nails, and put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into Christ's side, he would not believe what they said. Jesus knowing the incredulity of *Thomas*, meets his disciples on the next first day

John xx.
19.

day of the week, and *Thomas* being there, he called him, and bid him put his finger into the print of the nails which were in his feet and in his hands, and thrust his hand into his side. Which he did, and being convinced by undeniable demonstration, that Christ was risen, he cries out, "My Lord
" and my God."

CHAP.
VIII.

John xx.
28.

ALL the disciples of our Lord were witnesses of his resurrection, they saw him, they conversed with him for forty days after his resurrection, they particularly desired a solution of this question, "Lord, wilt thou
" at this time restore again the kingdom to
" Israel?" Here is sufficient evidence to determine a man's faith in this point. The number of witnesses, as we find from *Acts* i. 15. might be an hundred and twenty. See also *John* xx. 30. And from *1 Cor.* xv. 6. that in all, they were above five hundred, besides *Cephas*, and the twelve.

THE last miracle wrought by our Lord was his ascension into heaven. This was his own almighty act. He challenges it as such; "I ascend (*says he*) unto my Father, John xx.
" and 17.

PART "and your Father, &c." The witnesses of this fact were many. All the apostles, and most of the brethren, who see him ascend.

I.

SECT. IV.

A few observations upon the subject.

1. IT is now apparent, that no facts (the bare record of them) have such internal marks and evident tokens of truth and credibility in their relation, as these recorded by our evangelists. They were all transacted openly, in the most public places, before multitudes and throngs of people, men learned and unlearned, enemies as well as friends, who were the eye-witnesses, the relaters, and the recorders of them.

2. ST. Matthew, concludes his record of the miracle Christ performed on *Jairus's* daughter, thus: "And the FAME hereof
Matth. ix. 26. "went abroad into all that land." *i. e.* the report and credit of so extraordinary an act became the common talk of all the people round about that part of *Galilee*, wherein
Capernaum

Capernaum was situate. The tradition of CHAP. VIII. it must be fresh among these people at the time *Matthew* published his gospel. Again, our evangelist, having told us, that Christ healed all manner of infirmities among the people in *Galilee*, says, that “his FAME Matth. iv. 24. “went throughout all Syria, and they “brought unto him all sick people, and “he healed them.” This FAME was an oral tradition of the truth of the miraculous facts Jesus wrought in the cities of *Galilee*. Let A, a citizen of *Nazareth*, afflicted with the palsy for several years, be miraculously cured by Christ, nothing is more likely, than that the tradition (or fame) of this fact might remain in his family and kindred for several generations. Undoubtedly, he himself committed an account of it to writing. And this must be the case of all those persons on whom our Lord wrought miracles, particularly that of *Jairus’s* daughter, the widow of *Nain’s* son, and *Lazarus*. It must be confessed, if duly considered, that an oral universal tradition of Christ’s miracles, must last a very considerable time, for they were so many, and so extraordinary, that if a diseased person did but touch him,

364 *MIRACLES confirm the TRUTH, &c.*

PART him, or the hem of his garment, he was
II. made whole. Such surprizing facts could
not soon nor easily be forgot.

3. IT may justly be concluded, that no
sooner was Christ ascended into heaven, but
his disciples began to write down the occur-
rences of his life; and thus particular per-
sons might record the substance of our go-
spels within a year after the ascension.

4. *MATTHEW*, was a jew, and a
disciple of Christ's, and an eye-witness of
many of the miracles he performed. It is
very likely, he might pen these events as
they occurred. And his gospel might be
very early (within two or three years) in
use after the ascension of Christ, though we
cannot, at this day, positively prove this
point.

LASTLY, therefore the gospels in relat-
ing the miracles of Christ, relate real mat-
ters of fact; the credit and testimony of
which we may safely rely on, and be as cer-
tain, that they were performed by him, as
though we ourselves were eye-witnesses of
them,

C H A P,

CHAP. IX.

PROPHECIES testify the TRUTH
of the GOSPEL.

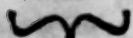
I. PROPHECIES contained in the book of Genesis, literally and obviously fulfilled in CHRIST and his doctrine. II. The prophecy of Moses literally fulfilled in CHRIST, and in him only. III. Prophecies of Isaiah literally and obviously fulfilled. IV. Prophecies of Jeremiah. V. Prophecy of Ezekiel fulfilled. VI. Of Daniel. VII. The general prophetic expectation literally fulfilled in CHRIST, and in his gospel.

THAT the truth of the gospel is justified by the prophecies of the *Old Testament*, will appear an undeniable fact, if we go over a few of them, and see how literally and obviously they are fulfilled in CHRIST, and his gospel.

SECT.

PART

I.



SECT. I.

PROPHECIES contained in the book of Genesis, literally and obviously fulfilled in CHRIST and his doctrine.

THE first is that of Gen. iii. 15. "And
 " I will put enmity between thee and the
 " woman, and between thy seed and her
 " seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou
 " shalt bruise his heel." By the serpent
 spoken of in the preceeding verse, commen-
 tators have understood the devil, who under
 some shape or appearance, familiar to *Eve*,
 did insinuate himself into her favour, and by
 that means easily deceived her; upon which
 account, he is here stiled the serpent. What-
 ever the extensive sense of these words may
 mean, cannot be determined; unless they
 have a reference to Christ and his time. The
 enmity of the devil to the children of men,
 signifies the repugnancy of *Lucifer* to their
 present and future happiness: his endeavours
 to subvert the means of redemption. The
 words are: *I will put enmity between thee
 and the woman, and between thy seed and her
 seed.*

seed. The enmity of the woman is, an CHAP. IX.
opposition to the schemes and powers of
Lucifer. It was to be in future time, I
will put, &c. The consequence of which
dissention was to be, the bruising of *Luci-*
fer's head. By which we must understand,
it shall come to pass, that the power of the
devil shall be weakened, and in part abo-
lished. Then follows the detriment or hurt,
which was to happen to the seed of the
woman, *and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

THE enmity here described, happened
not in the first four thousand years of the
world, as appears from the wicked and ido-
latrous state of both jews and heathens. It
follows, that this prediction is applicable
to events and occurrences that happened
since.

1. THE Seed of the woman was to bruise,
weaken, and in part abolish the power of Sa-
tan. This literally and obviously relates to
Christ, who was, in a strict and literal sense,
the Seed of the woman. St. Matthew tells Matth. i.
us, that Christ was born of a pure virgin, ^{18.}
without the junction or concurrence of a
man,

PART man, "SHE [MARY] WAS FOUND WITH
I. "CHILD OF THE HOLY GHOST."

2. AGAIN, Satan's head was to be bruised, i. e. his power and authority weakened, and in part abolished. This was literally and obviously fulfilled by the principles and doctrines of Christ. The devil's head, before the advent of God the Son, might, in no improper sense, be said to be the idolatries and sins of the whole world. As to idolatry, it is manifest, that wherever the gospel obtained, this superstition lost its force and power. Thus upon *Paul's* preaching christianity to the people of *Ephesus*:

Acts xix.
19.

"Many of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." And in this sense, it must be acknowledged, the gospel of Christ, the seed of a woman, has bruised the serpent's head.

3. AND *thou shalt bruise his heel.* These words denote the damage and secret hurt which *Lucifer*, by his power and cunning, would

would bring upon *the seed of the woman*. This literally relates to the sufferings of our Saviour, for the diabolical powers of this world crucified the Lord of life, who miraculously assumed the human nature of *the seed of the woman*. But farther, it denotes to us, the power and influence *Lucifer* should gain over christians. For instance: the present apostacy of our brethren of the romish scheme, who invoke saints and angels, pray to the virgin *Mary*, and fall down before shrines and images: their doctrines of penance and remission, transubstantiation, infallibility, and the like. And among all sorts of christians, their defection to all manner of vices, unnatural, as well as natural: their degeneracy in point of true faith: and their holding superstitious fancies in conjunction with christianity. Which, I think in a proper sense, may be termed, bruising his heel, that is, subverting and weakening the foundation of true religion, *Heel* here signifying *foundation*. And this is literally and strictly fulfilled in our days,

4. I WILL put enmity between thee and the woman. That is, in the last days men shall

B B

oppose

PART oppose the power and dominion which you
 I. have gotten over them, and there shall be a
 continual opposition between ye. And this
 is the case of all those who are of the *seed of the woman*, i. e. who are the true disciples of Christ. Their way of action and principles will always be repugnant to the scheme of *Lucifer*. *Lucifer's* power and cunning will always oppose them. This is strictly, literally and obviously fulfilled in our days.

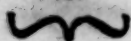
THE second prediction contained in this book, is, *Gen. xii. 3.* "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Or, as it is more fully expressed, *Cb. xxii. 18.* "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This blessing of all nations could not descend in the days of *Abraham*. It must respect future time, and therefore it is said, *In thy seed*, i. e. It shall come to pass in future time, that there shall arise one of thy generation, according to the flesh, whose principles, if imbibed, shall be a common blessing to all nations; the nation out of which I have called thee, shall be blessed thereby. This is literally and obviously fulfilled

fulfilled in the coming of Christ. He was of CHAP.
the seed of *Abraham*, Matth. i. 1, &c. His IX.
principles have been, and are, a common
blessing to all nations. The means of re-
demption, the privileges of salvation and re-
storation, are offered to all.

THE last is that of *Jacob*, Gen. xlix. 10.
“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
“nor a lawgiver from between his feet, un-
“til Shiloh come, and unto him shall the
“gathering of the people be.” This pre-
diction manifestly foretells some future
event. This was literally fulfilled in the
coming of Christ. He was born within two
years of the death of *Herod*, the last king of
Judah. It is particularly expressed, that to
Shiloh *the gathering of the people shall be*. This
is literally and obviously fulfilled in Christ
and his doctrine: all nations receive his
principles, and in that sense, the gathering
of the people is actually accomplished. Both
jews and gentiles are now gathered together
into one common body. All persons are
entitled to the privileges and immunities of
the gospel of redemption and restoration.

PART

I.



SECT. II.

THE prophecy of Moses literally fulfilled in CHRIST, and in him only.

MOSES tells his brethren, *Deut. xviii. 15.* “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a *PROPHET* from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.” The reader might easily determine who this *PROPHET* is, who was to be like unto *Moses*, without being pointed to him. He must readily conclude, that this prophecy is strictly, literally, obviously and absolutely fulfilled in Christ, and in him only. It will readily, be allowed, if considered, that no prophet from the time of *Moses* to the time of Christ, was like unto *Moses*, in no sense of the phrase, besides Christ, and the matters relating to him. The greatest force and misapplication imaginable must be put upon this prophecy to make it applicable to any other person, prophet, or prophets, than Jesus the Saviour of the world.

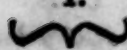
SECT.

SECT. III.

PROPHECIES of *Isaiah*, literally and obviously fulfilled.

THUS *Isaiah* describing the glorious privileges of Christ's kingdom, says: " And *Isa. ii. 2.*
" it shall come to pass in the last days, that
" the mountain of the Lord's house— shall
" be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." This is literally and obviously fulfilled in the gospel-state. The gospel is a mountain, higher than hills. Its excellency and worth, exceed all the systems of morality, or systems of Theology, invented by men. The nations of the earth have received the gospel, they have flowed into it. The people have excited one another to its reception in all ages. " Come, let us walk in its paths." And the apostles being assembled together in the holy city [*Jerusalem*] after Christ's ascension, upon the descent of the Holy Ghost; went forth from thence, and preached the gospel to all nations. " For out of Zion shall go Ver. 3.
" forth the law, and the word of the Lord

PART "from Jerusalem." The gospel has re-

I. buked many people, and judged among the nations: it reproves them of error, and is a certain rule for judgment. And, I could

Ver. 4. wish, it had beat our swords into plow-shares, and our spears into pruning-hooks, that we might have no occasion to rise one nation against another, neither learn war any more. However, I positively affirm, that if the principles and instructions of Christ were universally imbibed and practiced, these also would be its glorious and inseparable consequences: so that it is our own fault that this part of the prophecy is not fulfilled; for it is in the nature and tendency of our most holy vocation.

AGAIN, *Cb. xi. 4.* "He shall reprove
"with equity, and he shall smite the earth
"with the rod of his mouth." This was
literally and obviously fulfilled in Christ,
and in him only. The method he took of
reproof, was every way just and equitable.
He argued with men, he appealed to the
souls, or reasons, of all. In this way of equi-
ty he may be said literally to have reproved
the world. Signified more fully, *and he shall*

shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth. CHAP.

His arguings and persuasions, his doctrines and principles have through their intrinsic rectitude, in a spiritual sense, obliged every one to submit to his religion.

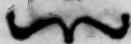
IX.

IN *Ch. lxii. 11.* *Isaiah* says, “ Behold, “ the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end “ of the world, say ye to the daughter of “ Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh.” This is literally and obviously fulfilled in Christ. He hath proclaimed his gospel for the good and benefit of all the nations under heaven. The first preachers of christianity, proposed it to the whole world. And were men to receive it in sincerity and truth, imbibe its principles, and observe its precepts, literally convinced would they be of the assertion of this prophecy, *Behold, thy salvation cometh.*

I MIGHT instance in a great many other passages which occur in this prophet; as *Ch. xlix. 42, &c. lxv. 1, &c. &c.* but the reader will readily perceive, if he reads them, that they do, in a strict and literal sense, relate to Christ and his doctrine.

PART

I.



SECT. IV.

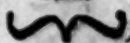
PROPHECIES of Jeremiah.

1. JEREMIAH thus predicts: *Cb.* xxxi. 22. "The Lord hath created a new
 " thing in the earth, a woman shall com-
 " pass a man." Our Lord took flesh of a
 pure virgin; *Mary* espoused to *Joseph*, who
 knew not a man, *Matth.* i. 18. So that this
 prophecy is obviously and literally fulfilled
 thereby.

2. "BEHOLD, the days come, saith the
 " Lord, that I will make a new covenant
 " with the house of Israel, and with the
 " house of Judah. I will put my law in their
 " inward parts: — for they shall all know
 " me, from the least of them to the greatest
 " of them, saith the Lord." To shew the
 entire completion of this: let it be remem-
 bered, (1.) That the gospel is a new cove-
 nant: and so that part of the prophecy is
 strictly and literally fulfilled, (2.) That it
 is in the power of every man to attain the
 knowledge of the gospel. This is allowed.

Thus

Thus is literally fulfilled, *They shall all know me, &c.* CHAP.
IX.



SECT. V.

PROPHECY of Ezekiel fulfilled.

“ THEN shall ye remember your own Ezekiel
“ evil ways, and your doings that were not xxxvi. 31.
“ good, and shall lothe yourselves in your
“ own sight, for your iniquities, and for
“ your abominations.” The whole world,
at the coming of Christ, were sunk into ido-
latry and vice. *Then*, i. e. when Christ the
lawgiver shall appear, *shall ye remember your
evil ways, and your doings that were not good :*
i. e. the gospel or doctrines of Christ shall
discover to you the sins that ye are now
guilty of, which ye commit with greediness,
and do not consider what ye do : *and ye shall
lothe yourselves in your own sight, for your ini-
quity, and for your abominations*, i. e. in those
days, when these glorious doctrines shall be
published, ye shall hate and lothe yourselves,
when you consider that you have been so
senseless as to be guilty of worshipping
images of wood and stone; and of those
sins

PART

I.



sins and immoralities, which the light and dictates of your souls would have informed you, if you had listened thereto, that such acts were unworthy rational beings. This was, and is, literally, obviously and strictly fulfilled in Christ and his doctrines. The natural tendency of the principles of Jesus, was, to convince the world of error. And this we know it did in the point of idolatry: and likewise in that of sin, at the first publication of it. St. Paul tells the *Romans*, that their "obedience to the gospel, was "come abroad unto all men," *Cb.* xvi. 19. And afterwards the *Corinthians*: "That "they come behind in no gift." *2 Cor.* i. 7. And he tells the *Ephesians*, that "all men "were dead in trespasses and sins, fulfilling "their lusts. (*But says*) that through the "appearance of Christ, they were quicken- "ed," *Eph.* ii. 1, 5. See *Acts* xix. 19.

SECT. VI.

PROPHECY of Daniel fulfilled.

CHAP. ix. 26. "And after threescore
"and two weeks shall Messiah the Prince
"be

“ be cut off: but not for himself. And the
 “ people of the prince that shall come, shall
 “ destroy the city and the sanctuary.” This
 was exactly fulfilled in Christ, he was cut
 off, but not for himself. For it is evident,
 he died by our sins, and rose again for our
 justification. No offence of his occasioned
 his death; but it was the iniquities of us.
 This we know also, if we will credit histo-
 rians, that the temple was destroyed by *Ves-*
pasian, and the city burnt, and one million,
 one hundred thousand jews slain. And if
 we value the testimony of travellers, we are
 assured that neither the sanctuary, temple,
 or wall of the city, have been rebuilt since
 that time.

CHAP.

IX.

SECT. VII.

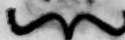
*THE general prophetic expectation literally
 fulfilled in CHRIST, and in his gospel.*

I WILL now briefly shew, that the pro-
 phetic expectation of the prophets under
 the jewish œconomy was exactly, literally
 and obviously fulfilled in Christ, and in the
 matters relating to him.

I. I

PART

I.



John iv.
21—24.

I. I HAVE asserted and proved *, that the prophets of the *Old Testament* did expect a revelation from heaven, which would supersede the mosaic law. That this their prophetic expectation was fulfilled in Christ, appears from our Lord's prohibition of external, ceremonial, ritual worship. The mosaic burthen is abolished by Jesus in these words: "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." The law of *Moses* obliged the jews thrice in a year to go up to *Jerusalem* to worship in the temple, but our Lord says, that men should not be obliged to perform and observe his injunction: *The hour cometh, when ye shall not worship the Father in Jerusalem.* And having thus abolished or prohibited the observance


servance of the mosaic law, he then tells us: *The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.* What this worship is, the reader has seen †.

CHAP.

IX.

OUR Lord [Matth. xi. 27.] having laid claim to the Messiahship, adds: "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I choose to understand these words, (whether spoke to jews or gentiles) thus: Come unto me all you, who have laboured under the burthensome rites and ceremonies of the mosaic law, and all ye worshippers of idols, who are fatigued with observing their superstitious customs, and I will free you from this intolerable burthen. "Take my yoke upon ye, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Receive my doctrines, and imbibe my principle, for the worship due unto God is spiritual: a worship which will introduce lowliness and meekness of heart; and this will prove of such efficacy, that your spirits will find

PART find in them a solid rest and everlasting joy.

I.  "For my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light." I assure you, my doctrines are easily to be learned, the observation of the duties I require, are pleasant, full of comfort, satisfaction and joy.

2. As the prophets expected a revelation from heaven, so they expected also, that the Revealer would be God. * I have in my sixth chapter already asserted the divinity of Christ, and thereby fully shewn, that He revealing the gospel answered their prophetic expectation.

3. I HAVE shewn †, that the prophets did expect, that the revelation of the will of God should be universal, for the common good and benefit of all people. That this their expectation was strictly and literally fulfilled in Christ appears from these

Mat. xxviii words, "Go ye therefore, (*says our Lord*)

19. "and teach all nations, baptizing them in
"the name of the Father, and of the Son,
"and of the Holy Ghost."

I SHALL

* Chap. III. §. ii. p. 135, &c.

† Ibid. p. 146, &c.

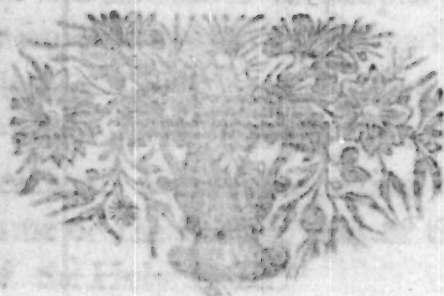
I SHALL not trouble my reader with a farther citation of prophecies out of the *Old Testament*, and with shewing him in how literal and obvious a sense, they are fulfilled in Christ. I judge, that what has been offered is sufficient, and (I hope) has given him satisfaction.

The END of the FIRST PART.



I shall not trouble my reader with a further citation of prophecies out of the Old Testament, and with shewing him in how literal and obvious a sense, they are fulfilled in Christ. I judge, that what has been offered is sufficient, and (I hope) has given him satisfaction.

THE END of the First Part.



PART II.

THE

LAYMAN'S Plain

ANSWER

To a late Book intituled,

*A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of
the Christian Religion.*

C c

PART II.

THE

LAYMAN'S Plain

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To a late Book intitled,

A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of
the Christian Religion.

C c

THE
Layman's Plain
ANSWER

T O

Grounds and Reasons, &c.

THE book under consideration did not come to my hands till the 22d day of *January* in this present year 1730. The reader therefore is desired to excuse the brevity of the answer. I had finished the first part of this work some time before I saw this book. The author has intituled his performance, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*. Wherein he has endeavoured to misrepresent the whole scheme of

PART christianity ; has studiously attempted to
 II. prove, that Christ and his apostles reasoned
 with men from types and allegories only ;
 says, that the sole proof of christianity de-
 pends upon prophecy : and, in fine, destroys
 that proof, and leaves it destitute of any
 proof at all.

I HAVE, in the foregoing part of this work,
 given my reader the sole proof of christiani-
 ty, which I judge to consist of three parts :
 the first, the internal excellence of the go-
 spel : the second, the testimony arising from
 miracles : and the third, that of prophecy.
 I shall in this part prove, that this was the
 method which Christ and his apostles took in
 preaching the gospel, in answer to the mis-
 representations, cavils, and trifling excep-
 tions of this writer.

SECT. I.

ANSWER to his first chapter.

Page 4.

OUR author says, *Christianity is founded
 on judaism, and the New Testament
 on the Old ; the authors of the New, prove all
 the parts of christianity from the Old Testa-
 ment,*

ment, and Jesus and his apostles fulfilled the predictions of the prophets, who typified christianity, is asserted in the New.

SECT.

I.



HE cites three texts to prove this his assertion: I suppose he intended them as such. The first is *John* v. 39. thus cited: *The* Ibid.

Old Testament, which is said to contain the words of eternal life. In *St. John* the words

are: "Search the scriptures, for in them

"ye think ye have eternal life, and they are

"they which testify of me." The misre-

presentation of this text is obvious to every

one. Our Saviour tells the jews, that they

thought that the writings of the *Old Testa-*

ment had in them eternal life. Our author

represents it as though our Saviour positive-

ly affirmed, that the *Old Testament* contain-

ed the very words of eternal life. Here he

imposes upon his reader. The true mean-

ing of our Lord's words, I humbly conceive

to be this: Consult the writings of your

own prophets, for I perceive that you jews,

look upon them with great veneration, ye

judge that eternal life is conveyed by them.

In these scriptures are recorded the expecta-

tion of your prophets of the coming of the

Messiah, and behold, I am he. You will

PART

II.

find that I am the very Being whom they expected should appear. It is evident then, that our Lord doth not affirm, what our author asserts, viz. That the *Old Testament* contains *the words of eternal life*; but much to the contrary, viz. the jews thought there was in them [not that Christ said so] *eternal life*. Our author to make this text suit his purpose, has added three words to it, viz. *the words of*, which are not in St. *John*. Christ says, that the prophecies or writings of their scriptures testified of him: *i. e.* that the writers of those books did expect his coming. And that he was the eternal life, and not the *Old Testament*, I think he affirms in the following verse, [ver. 40.] “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” This instance is far from proving that christianity is founded on judaism, or the *New Testament* on the *Old*. It evidently asserts the contrary: and its context plainly affirms, that Christ is the *eternal life*.

MUCH of the same nature is his misrepresentation of *Matth. v. 17*. he cites it to prove, that it is the design of the *New Testament* writers to represent *Jesus and his apostles*

bles as fulfilling the historical parts of the Old Testament, and the jewish law. The words are: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Our Lord doth not intend, what this author insinuates, that it is the only design of Him and his apostles to fulfill by their mission, the predictions of the prophets, the historical parts of the *Old Testament*, and the *jewish law*. By the law here spoken of, is not meant the ceremonial law, but the moral or natural law. This Christ came not to destroy, but to confirm and establish. The morality of the law, the decalogue I mean, was established and fulfilled by Christ: but the ceremonial law was not. I subjoin here a paraphrase upon this assertion of Christ's, *viz.* Think not that I am come to destroy those just ideas of the divine Essence, or those principles of justice and love due from one man to another, which are to be found in the writings of your law, or in those of your prophets. No; this is not my design, the doctrines I now teach, and those which I am about to preach, will tend to establish them, and to bring them to an entire com-

PART II. pletion and perfection. How wide is this of our author's notion; and yet this is the real meaning of the words. They assert, that Christ did not come to destroy those truths which were written in the *Old Testament*. Our writer would have them assert, that Christ came on purpose to fulfill some ancient prophecies of the *Old Testament*. Thus he imposes upon his reader.

p. 5. HE says, The *jewish law is expressly said to prophecy of, or typify, christianity*. To prove this, he cites *Matth. xi. 13*. "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." *i. e.* The prophets conclude their prophecies with foretelling the appearance of *John*. This is the true meaning of the words. *Mal. iv. 5, 6*. Where *Malacbi*, the last of the prophets, prophetically expected the coming of *John*. With which prophecy he concludes. So that these words are not an assertion, that the *jewish law* typified christianity.

THUS it appears, that the assertions of this writer in his first chapter, are entirely false: and therefore it is evident, that christianity is not grounded on judaism, nor the *New* on the *Old Testament*. Nor does Christ claim

claim the obedience and submission of the world, because prophetically expected by the jews ; neither was it the design of the authors of the *New Testament* to prove all the parts of christianity from the *Old*.

SECT.
II.

SECT. II.

ANSWER to his second chapter.

IN this chapter, our author endeavours to prove that our Saviour and his apostles grounded and proved christianity from the *Old Testament*.

HE says, That *Matthew* proves Mary's being with child by the Holy Ghost, from the *Old Testament*, i. e. from *Isaiab* the prophet. This is false. He does not prove her miraculous conception of Jesus from the *Old Testament*. He proves it from the matter of fact itself. These are his words: " Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise : When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was FOUND WITH CHILD OF THE HOLY GHOST." *

Ibid.

And

* See Part I. Chap. viii. §. iii. p. 291. Concerning Christ's miraculous assumption of the human nature.

PART II. And the argument of the evangelist is only this, at *ver.* 22, 23. How applicable to this event are the words of *Isaiab*, “Behold a virgin, &c.” Here the evangelist proves the matter of fact from the thing itself, not from the *Old Testament*. The intent of the evangelist is only to embellish his argument with the words of the prophet, and not to prove the truth of the fact itself; that, it is plain, he had done before.

WHAT is here said, may be affirmed of most of his other instances, in *p.* 5, to the paragraph in *p.* 6. which are in number sixteen.

p. 6. HE says, *Jesus himself is represented as proving the truth of christianity from the Old Testament*. He cites *Luke xxiv. 15—22. 25—27*. If he means by this, that our Lord directed his disciples to the very texts in the *Old Testament*, wherein the prophets discover an expectation of some Great Person in the flesh, who should appear in a suffering condition, I entirely agree with him. But as he insinuates, that Christ proves himself to be the Messiah of the jews, and christianity itself from the scriptures of the *Old Testament*, I cannot but dissent from him. For certainly,

certainly, a prophecy or expectation of a thing, is not a proof that that thing must of course come to pass. The prophecy may corroborate the truth of a real matter of fact in a low degree, when it is actually accomplished; but it cannot make that true which never had an event. It is therefore probable, that our Saviour, then unknown to his disciples, did tell them who he was, and reproved them for not believing his resurrection, when he had told them before of it, and had given them such amazing instances of his divinity, in healing the sick, and in raising the dead; of which they were eye-witnesses. And to remove the offence they had took at his sufferings and death, he urges, that some ancient writers, for whom they had a great veneration, had delivered it as their opinion, that wicked men would put the Messiah to death. These passages in the *Old Testament*, he, at this time, expounded to his disciples. How foreign would it be for a man to prove the truth of a thing come to pass to day, by citing a prophetic conjecture, which had been made some hundred years before. It would be far more reasonable to expect, that

SECT.
II.

PART that a person should appeal to the fact itself
II. for its truth, and if he thought proper, in-
force its veracity by ancient prediction.

IT is plain from what has been urged, that Christ did not appeal to the writings of the prophets, to prove that he was the Messiah, and to prove christianity; but only to shew, that the prophets did foresee that Messiah should suffer and be put to death. He did not urge it as a sole proof, nor would he, perhaps, so much as have appealed to these writings, had not his disciples said, "We trusted that it was he who was to have redeemed Israel." Suppose no one person had expected, or prophesied of, the appearance of Christ, and notwithstanding he did appear, and taught a most glorious doctrine, and wrought such an infinite number of signs and wonders, as Christ really did, and at last was put to death by the rulers of a city, and, as he had foretold, did actually assume his body and rise from the dead. I say, notwithstanding no man had predicted these things, I should think myself obliged to receive his doctrine for the internal excellency of it, and from this, and his wonderful works conclude his divinity.

And

And this was the case of the heathen world, SECT.
II.
who paid no regard to the jewish writings.

OUR author says, That *Peter* proves that the apostles should speak with tongues from *Joel*, and the resurrection of Christ from the *Psalms*. P. 7. 8.

IN answer to this:

1. *PETER* cites *Joel* only to shew that the words of that writer was applicable to his subject; for he had proved the matter of fact before, in these words: *For these*, i. e. the apostles, who speak the languages of several nations, *are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day*: [that is, about nine a clock in the morning with us.] And then follows the apostles citation from *Joel*. So that the truth is, *St. Peter* proves first that the apostles were not drunk, and that they did really speak the tongues of the *Parthians*, *Medes*, *Elamites*, &c. And secondly, tells the mocking jews, that *Joel's* words were applicable to this event.

2. *PETER* proves the resurrection of Christ from the fact itself. His argument is this: Ye know that Jesus of Nazareth wrought many signs and wonders among you.

PART you. Him ye have crucified: but he is risen from the dead. Thus he proves the resurrection of Christ. And then follows a citation out of the *Psalms*. But any one who reads *Acts* ii. may easily perceive, that he first proves the resurrection of Christ, and then embellishes his argument with the words of *David*.

- p. 8. He says, That *Paul* endeavoured at *Antioch* to prove, that the history of *Jesus* was contained in the Old Testament, and that he and *Barnabas* was commanded in the Old Testament to preach the gospel to the gentiles. But suppose this was really and literally true, how does this prove that the apostles made use of no other, and more substantial proofs, in vindication of their mission. Is their citations out of the *Old Testament*, a greater and more weighty reason for their preaching the gospel, than the command of Christ, and the necessity of such a publication of it? If Christ, or the necessity of the act itself, had not first obligated them to preach the gospel, it is most likely, they would never have thought of, nor applied to their case, the words of the prophets. Indeed the command of Christ to preach the gospel put them

them in mind of this way of citation. So that they only apply these words to themselves, but not prove their mission or doctrine thereby, as our author would insinuate. And as for their preaching the gospel to the gentiles, I think it is but a natural conclusion, that they should judge, that they also should be partakers of the gospel; especially when Christ commanded them to teach it to all nations.

Our author says to this effect, That *James* concluded the dispute about circumcision from the *Old Testament*, that is, he says, from *Amos and Moses*. But the thing itself was disputed before by *Peter*, "Now therefore (*says he*) why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." Then *Paul and Barnabas* declare, that the gentiles were equally with the jews in favour with God. Then spake *Simeon*, and after him *James*. He says, that *Simeon* had declared how God, at the first [*i. e.* at the beginning of the gospel] did visit the gentiles. And to this, says he, agrees [*i. e.* is very pertinent and applicable] the words of the prophets. See *Acts xv.*

p. 8, 9.

PART 16, 17, 18. Where he cited this to corro-

II. borate (not to prove) *Simeon's* assertion.

He concludes, from the whole debate, (for he was the last speaker) that the gentile converts should be written unto, "that they
 "abstain from pollutions of idols, and from
 "fornication, and from things strangled,
 "and from blood." He does not conclude it, I say, from the prophet's words, but from the whole preceding debate, as is evident from the account itself. St. *James* thought the words of *Amos* applicable to *Simeon's* assertion, and therefore he cited them as a recommendation of his speech, and then judged from the whole debate. It was a sort of compliment, or rather a note of St. *James's* acquiescence, to the opinion of *Simeon* before he began to deliver his sentence. In my judgment the words of *James* relate immediately to the account of the miracles wrought among the gentiles given by *Paul* and *Barnabas* at the 12th verse of this chapter; and let a crotchet be put at the beginning of the 15th, and another at the end of the 17th. By this means, the words of *Amos* will be included. And we shall read the 12th, 13th, 14th, 18th, 19th and 20th verses

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II.

verses together, and from thence easily perceive, that *James* had in view, when he drew his conclusion, the weight of the arguments of the apostles on this head. “ Then

“ all the multitude kept silence, and gave
“ audience to Paul and Barnabas declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the gentiles by them.
“ And after they held their peace, James answered, saying, men and brethren, hearken unto me, Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the gentiles to take out of them a people for his own name. Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.
“ Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the gentiles are turned unto God. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”

HE affirms, That *the Bereans are highly extolled for searching the scriptures; that is, the Old Testament.* But how very partial is our author, he overlooks the chief reason of the apostle's commendation of them,

D D which

PART which is in the very same verse he has cited.

II.

“ more noble than those in *Thessalonica*, in
 “ that they received the word with all REA-
 “ DINESS OF MIND, and searched the scrip-
 “ tures daily, whether those things were
 “ so.” Where the first and principal rea-
 son of their being more noble than those of
Thessalonica, is asserted to be the *readiness*
of mind wherewith they received the glo-
 rious truths of christianity. And then, as
 it was usual, for the apostles to apply in
 their sermons certain parts of scripture to
 the subject they treated on, these *Bereans*
 strengthened their faith by searching to see
 whether these words were so or not. And
 these scriptures, which the *Bereans* searched,
 might be the gospel of St. *Matthew*; be-
 cause it is said, *they searched the scriptures*
daily, whether THOSE THINGS *were so*. What
 were THOSE THINGS they searched for? Or,
 what were THOSE THINGS *Paul* preached?
 They were the gospel of Christ, the mira-
 cles he wrought, particularly that of his re-
 surrection. These things certainly was re-
 corded by the disciples of Jesus. And these
 writings or scriptures, it is likely, the *Be-*
reans

Bereans searched daily. But it is plain, that the apostle principally styles them noble, because *they received the word with all readiness of mind*. Our author's seeming assertion that the *Bereans* were highly extolled only upon their searching the scriptures of the *Old Testament*, is a false representation. The apostle asserts, that this people *received the word with all readiness*. And this is that for which he chiefly commends them.

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II.

To prove, that the apostles grounded christianity on the *Old Testament*, he cites these words of *Paul*, [Acts xxvi. 6.] which he spake when he was accused before king *Agrippa*: " I stand, and am judged for
" the hope of the promise made of God un-
" to our fathers: *That is*, says our author,
for teaching christianity, or the true doctrine of
the Old Testament. This is his paraphrase. But the natural is this: And now I stand, and am judged for the hope which our fathers had, the resurrection of the dead: Or, And now I stand, and am judged for the hope and expectation which our prophets had of the coming of the *Messiah*. The first of these paraphrases is plain from what *St. Paul* says soon after, " Why should it be thought a
D D 2 " thing

p. 101

PART “ thing incredible with you, that God

II. “ should raise the dead? ” The resurrec-



tion was an ancient doctrine before the coming of Christ ; and, it is certain, the apostle alludes to it. And though christianity does include all that was just and good in judaism, yet it does not therefore follow, that christianity is judaism modernized, or explained.

p. 10, 11.

OUR author would have us believe, that St. *Paul* grounds the resurrection of Christ on the history of the prophet *Jonas*, when he says, “ Jesus rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.” It is likely, it was according to the scriptures of the *New Testament* ; for St. *Matthew* might have writ his gospel before St. *Paul* writ this epistle to the *Corinthians*. But not to insist on this. Suppose the apostle did direct the *Corinthians* to the story of *Jonas*, yet it does not follow that he proves or grounds the resurrection of Christ upon it. For if he had intended it as such, it would have been easy for him to have said, that *Jonas* was a type of Christ, and that his delivery from the whale’s belly, was an omen that Jesus Christ should be delivered from the grave. And if this was requisite

quisite in order to prove the resurrection of Christ from the dead, then it would be pre-requisite that every person embracing christianity should, first of all, believe the story of *Jonas*, which the gentiles did not. This is the strange method by which this writer would have *St. Paul* to prove the truth of our Saviour's resurrection. The apostle makes no mention of *Jonas* in the place referred to, which is *1 Cor. xv.*

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II.

HIS citation from *Gal. iv. 21.* is nothing to his purpose. p. 11.

HE misrepresents *St. Paul's* words when he tells *Timothy*, that *the scriptures was able to make men wise unto salvation.* By which he would have us understand, that *St. Paul* says, the scriptures of the *Old Testament* are sufficient for our salvation, exclusive of the doctrines of Christ. But the plain meaning of the apostle's words, is this: That the scriptures of the *Old Testament*, if attended to, will furnish a man with such wisdom as will lead him to lay hold of the glad tidings of redemption, the glorious doctrines of Christ our salvation. And that *Timothy* had made a proper use of the prophetic expectation of the writers of the *Old Testament*, which p. 12.

PART had made him so wise as to lay hold of christianity. This is the only meaning of St. Paul.

II.

Ibid.

He says, that St. Paul asserts, That himself and others are ministers of the New Testament, as being ministers not of the letter, but of the spirit, of the law, that is, of the Old Testament *spiritually understood*. The citation is, 2 Cor. iii. 6. "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit." I think the apostle means, that persons embracing christianity become ministers, or servants, to a spiritual worship, and are no more in bondage to observe burthensome rites and ceremonies of external worship. How foreign is this to what this writer asserts! and yet this seems to me the literal meaning of the apostle's words.

Ibid.

AGAIN, he says, that St. Paul in his epistle to the *Hebrews*, endeavoured to prove, that christianity was contained in the Old Testament, and was implied in the *jewish history and law*, both which he makes types and shadows of christianity. The words referred to, are in Heb. viii. 5. which words in their plain and obvious sense signify, that the law of *Moses* was abolished by Christ. And it is certain,

certain, christianity is not contained in the Jewish history and law, only so far as there is to be found in those writings a prophetic expectation of the gospel.

SECT.
II.

IN concluding this chapter he affirms, That *the grand fundamental article of christianity was, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah of the jews, predicted in the Old Testament.* If it was, it must be only to those believing those scriptures, and not to gentiles, who would regard the authority of it, no more than we do the *Koran of Mahomed.* So that the fundamental article of christianity was, That Jesus Christ of *Nazareth* did preach the gospel of salvation, and did in confirmation of that doctrine work many signs and wonders in all parts of *Judea* and the places bordering thereon, and that he was put to death by the jews at *Jerusalem*, and that he rose the third day, and after conversing with his disciples forty days on earth, ascended into heaven. This must be the faith of a gentile who sincerely embraced christianity. For the gentiles were not required by Christ, nor by his apostles, first to learn to be jews, and then christians. No; they came directly out of heathenism into christianity.

P. 12.

BUT

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II.

BUT yet it does not appear, that this was the fundamental article required even of the jews themselves. “ I (*says our Lord*) “ have done among you the works which “ none other man did. Believe me for the “ ~~very~~ works sake.” Jesus appeals to his gospel and miracles to prove his right to their belief. Therefore our author should have proved that Christ and his apostles laid his fundamental article down to be believed by all men. But this he does not so much as attempt.

SECT. III.

ANSWER to chap. III.

p. 13. OUR author says, That *the Old Testament is the sole canon of christians, and yet the sole true canon of scripture.* And, p. 14. he says, that the writings of the New Testament *are christian books, and contain proofs of christianity from the Old Testament; but contain christianity itself, no otherwise, than as explaining, illustrating, and confirming the christianity taught in the Old Testament.* Therefore, p. 15. *christianity is only judaism explained, and set in a due light.* A

A MAN who had never heard any thing of christianity before our author published his elaborate piece, would be led readily to conclude from what he says, that the doctrines which Christ taught men were no other than a mere explanation of the jewish law given by *Moses* to the children of *Israel* about the year of the world 2500; that the doctrine of the christian religion was no new law, but a very old one; that Christ and his apostles did not pretend to preach a new doctrine, but only to explain and unfold the spiritual meaning of *Moses's* law; that all the truths of christianity are contained in the jewish law, and that this new doctrine is only a reverberation or second declaration of that law. He would likewise conclude, that if Christ and his apostles left behind them any authentic writings of their reasonings with the jews for the establishment of such their explanatory doctrine, those writings must be full of citations out of that jewish law, mentions of ritual ceremonies, filled with arguments of the divinity and usefulness of the jewish law. Farther, he would expect to find in such writings, nothing contradictory, much less, any thing abrogatory

PART abrogatory of *Moses's* law, nothing repugnant to its rites and ceremonies, and everywhere, almost in every page, commendations and praises of the excellency of the old ceremonial law, and demonstrations of its intrinsic and natural tendence to make men wise unto salvation.

II.

THESE would, I think, be the expectations which would arise in a stranger to christianity, whether he were jew or gentile, upon this writer's assertion. However, I leave it to the reader to determine for himself what would be the natural thoughts which would arise to any man, who can be persuaded that christianity is only judaism explained, or the jewish law spiritually understood.

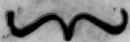
FOR my own part, I should expect to find the four gospels, which contain the history of the life and preachings of our Saviour, full of citations made by Christ from the mosaic law, and a full explanation of them by the same hand. I should not be so ridiculous as to think of finding any thing derogatory of that law in these books, any miracles wrought in favour of a new law, whose tendence was to abolish that old law;

no declarations, that that ceremonial dispensation was not able to make men perfect, or wise unto salvation. I should expect to find *The Acts of the Apostles*, little else, than the bare reasonings of these men with the jews to observe their own rites and ceremonies, that is, the mosaic law. And as they did reason with gentiles, I would think to find, that the apostles endeavoured to make the gentiles, jews. I would lastly suppose, that the epistles of *Paul, Peter, &c.* contained letters of advice to the several places to which they write to continue firm in the strict observance of the purity of the law.

Now, if this, shall upon examination be found to be truth, then our author's assertion, that the christian revelation is only judaism explained, or judaism spiritually understood, or lastly, mystical judaism, is entirely right.

BUT if all this be really found to be mere invention, and that none of these things are to be discovered in the writings of the *New Testament*, then this writer is guilty of imposing upon his reader, when he without the least shew of real argument dogmatically asserts, that christianity is only judaism

PART daism explained, and spiritually under-
 II. stood.



THE instances he gave us in the last chapter to prove, that the apostles proved christianity from the *Old Testament*, have been fully shewn not to be to his purpose. I have on the other hand proved, that they always appealed to the facts themselves, for the truth of christian doctrines, or articles of faith, and only in a secondary way, or by way of illustration, or to shew how applicable the words of the prophets were to such events cited divers passages out of the writings of the *Old Testament*.

I WILL therefore shew, first, that the *Old Testament* is not the sole canon of christians. Secondly, That the doctrines, principles, or gospel of Christ, is the rule or canon by which christians are obliged to act.

I. THE *Old Testament* is not the sole canon of christians. If it was, then christians would be obliged to hold judaism in conjunction with christianity, and to observe the rites and ceremonies of the mosaic or jewish law. No, it is confessed that the christian religion has abolished this ritual burthen. So that the first five books of *Moses* are by
 this

this means expunged out of the christian canon. Again, nor are the journeyings, battles and idolatries of the jews rules and canons for christians. Such things are forbid by the doctrines of christianity *. But if there can be found in the *Old Testament* any ideas or apprehensions there written which are worthy of the divine Essence, and agreeable to the soundest reason, and to those principles which Christ our lawgiver has taught us, then so far the *Old Testament* is the canon of christians ; but this not primarily or solely, but secondarily, and in conjunction with the canon of Christ.

BUT this will more fully appear by shewing,

2. THAT the doctrines, principles or gospel of Christ is the Rule or canon by which Christians are obliged to act.

THE doctrines or principles of christianity take in every thing that is valuable in the jewish writings. Our Lord's sermon on the mount, will be found to be a canon for christians.

IT teaches humility, mercy, justice, peace, universal love and charity towards all men.

* See Chap. VII.

PART men. It informs us what ideas we ought to

II.

form of God, as, that he is the common Parent of all men, that he provides for all, and that he wills all should lay hold of salvation. And it teaches us, that we seek redemption, or the kingdom of heaven, before all worldly good.

SUCH are the canons christians are solely to walk by.

THE jews were enemies as appears by the canon of the *Old Testament* to the nations of the earth. But the canon of Christ is, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, that ye love those that hate you, and persecute you."

Moses made them a separate people, and gave his laws to them only, Christ's canon says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." So that all men, jew or gentile, greek or barbarian, are to be joint-partakers of the privileges of the gospel, and are to be governed by his canon, the canon of the *New Testament*, and not by the canon of the *Old*.

THUS it entirely appears that our author's assertion, that the *Old Testament* is the sole canon of christians is absurd and ridiculous.

THE

THE writings of the evangelists were extant within thirty years after Christ's death. The doctrines of Christ were always the sole canon of scripture. For, as I said before, the christian canon takes in all that was valuable in jewish writings. Our author seems to allow in p. 13, 14. that the writers of the books of the *New Testament* were inspired men, and that inspiration is sufficient to render a book canonical. So that according to his own confession, the writings of the *New Testament* may be of some use to christians, for he allows they explain the spiritual sense of the *Old Testament*. So that if one was to judge from our author's argument, we must conclude, that the *New Testament* is the sole true canon of christians; (as it really is) for he says, it contains, the jewish law, and the explanation of it. Which latter is to be preferred before the former upon that account. For every man prefers an author with explanatory notes, before the same author without them.

PART
II.

SECT. IV.

ANSWER to chap. IV.

p. 20.

OUR author attempts in this chapter to prove, *That it is a common and necessary method for new revelations to be built and grounded upon precedent revelations.* And therefore he concludes, p. 25, *that the truth of christianity depends, as it ought, on ancient revelations, which are contained in the Old Testament, and more particularly and immediately on the revelations made to the jews therein.* To support this, p. 24. he cites St. *Luke* to shew that the evangelist endeavoured to prove that christianity was a most antique religion. The words are in *cb. i. 70.* “As
“ he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world
“ began.” The words are not St. *Luke's*: but are a part of the joy and rapture of *Zacharias* on the birth of his son, whose name he had called *John*. At this time, and upon this occasion, he applies certain passages out of the *Old Testament* as pertinent to this event. So that instead of St. *Luke* says,

PART *christianity was the doctrine of the Old Testa-*
 II. ment. In answer to this : It is plain, that
 St. *Paul* does not assert, that he worshipped
 God according to the *Old Testament* : he as-
 serts only, that after the manner which
 the jews, his accusers, called heresy ; so
 he worshipped the God of the *Israelites* : and
 then, he assures them, that he believed all
 the parts of the law and the prophets, or
 judged several passages of them applicable
 to Christ and his revelation. A man may
 very consonant with christianity believe the
 reality of all the parts of the *Old Testa-*
ment. But it does not therefore follow, that
 he believes christianity is the genuine and
 true doctrine of the *Old Testament*. And this
 was the case of St. *Paul* : he embraced the
 principles or religion of Jesus, and believed
 all things which are written in the *Old Te-*
stament.

THESE two instances therefore do not
 prove our author's point, viz. *That it is a*
common and necessary method for new revela-
tions to be built and grounded on precedent re-
velations. The first asserts, that holy men
 of old had a prophetic expectation of chri-
 stianity. The second, that the apostle
 believed

believed the several prophecies and facts contained in the history of the *Old Testament*. SECT. IV.

WE will now see how far the assertion of our author may fairly be allowed.

IT is very certain, that ancient revelations or doctrines given or preached by persons, who lived in the several ages of the world, before the advent of the Eternal *Logos* might be of use to make way for the admission or foundation of a more perfect one. Thus the apostle, speaking of the revelation given by *Moses*, says, that “the law was a schoolmaster to bring men unto Christ.” It is obvious to every one, who is conversant with the *Old Testament*, that there are to be found in *Moses* and the writings of the prophets, ideas worthy of God, generous principles in respect of our neighbour, &c. These are called revelations: and a Person preaching a new revelation may carry on and improve the old revelation.

BUT this is not the only way of grounding revelations; if it were, then it were absolutely necessary, that there should have been a pre-existent revelation. On the other

PART hand, I assert, that the chief method of

II.

grounding a new revelation (or in particular, it was the principal method of Christ and his apostles) was, a due appeal to the souls, or reasons of men, whether the things they spake were just and equitable, and worthy of their reception. And, indeed, this must be owned, to be the common and necessary method of building and grounding a new revelation. For nothing is more certain than this, that the mind, or soul, of a man must be convinced of the doctrines preached. And this must be done by the preachers making a due appeal to the rational faculty, or faculties of the person or persons he preaches to. If this be not done, no one can receive the doctrine of Christ rightly. Precedency, authority, and antiquity may make slaves to a religion, or to a way of thinking and acting; but it is the free choice and assent of the soul, or reason, that makes men (who may be termed) voluntiers in any profession. So, tho' christianity may be corroborated and confirmed by preceeding revelations; yet it does appear, that christianity is chiefly founded by an appeal to the souls, or reasons, of men.

AND

AND this is the common method in SECT. V.
 which our Lord primarily and principally
 instilled his principles into men. Often
 occurs this expression of his: "He that
 hath ears to hear, let him hear." This I
 take to be an appeal to the intellectual fa-
 culties of mankind. It supposes, in my
 judgment, that there was a principle, a be-
 ing in man, capable by a due use of the
 powers of his soul to receive his doctrine *.

SECT. V.

ANSWER to chap. V.

THIS chapter contains a general asser-
 tion only, *That the chief proofs of chri-* p. 26.
stianity from the Old Testament, are urged
by the apostles in the New. An assertion
 so weak and trifling, that our author him-
 self passes it over without producing one
 single instance from the writings of the apo-
 stles in support of it.

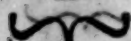
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SECT.

* See Part I. Chap. vii. *Of the internal excellence*
of the Gospel, where I have fully proved, that chri-
 stianity appeals to the unprejudiced judgment of every
 man's spiritual being.

PART

II.



SECT. VI.

ANSWER to chap. VI.

Ibid.

AND hereupon in his next chapter, he ventures to affirm, *That if those proofs are valid, christianity is established on its true foundation.* Insinuating, that christianity is void of all other proofs, and that the *Old Testament* prophecies are the sole proofs of christianity. To support this representation, he misrepresents the words of St. *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* i. 19. But it is plain, he has either mistook the apostle's meaning, or wilfully misrepresented it. They do not prove, that ancient prophecy is the sole proof of christianity; but that the internal excellency of the doctrines of Christ, and the miracles wrought by him to establish his religion, together with the prophecies of the scriptures of the *Old Testament* are the sole proof of christianity.

I READILY allow, that there are degrees of proofs. Thus, I think, the proof of the internal excellency of the doctrines Christ taught is to be preferred to miracles and prophecy:

prophecy: and that of miracles to prophecy: and the proofs by prophecy, to be the last, in respect of its usefulness. The proof of the internal excellency of christianity is of general and universal use to all men in all ages of the world. The proof by miracles is confined within a narrow compass, it extended but to few, as eye-witnesses, in respect to the whole body of mankind. But the relations of those miracles wrought by our Saviour have in them such external evidences, as shew his divinity, and confirm the belief of christianity. The proof by prophecy extended, at the time of our Saviour's preaching, to the jews only. They had a threefold proof, the internal excellency of the principles of Jesus, his miracles, and their own prophecies. But the gentiles were not benefited by the proof by prophecy, because they did not believe the writings of the *Old Testament*. Therefore they had but two methods of proof, viz. the internal excellency of christianity, and the proof by miracles. Which two proofs (but the first principally) are certainly sufficient to determine a man's choice of christianity, if he sincerely attended to the dictates of his

PART soul. For it is certain, that the real and intrinsic value, the morality and usefulness of the doctrines Christ taught are to be preferred to miracles wrought, or that could be wrought in favour of it. This, I think, is plain from *Abraham's* answer to *Dives*, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rose from the dead." Our author, *p.* 27. has endeavoured to misrepresent this passage as tending to destroy the proof by miracles: yet it only shews that if men will not adhere to and obey the doctrinal part of the scriptures, the greatest of miracles would be of no use to them.

It is allowed, that the proof by miracles, is not the only and sole proof of christianity; it is but one part of it: though the miracles wrought by our Saviour are such, as no man ever wrought. Of what man or being, can it be said, besides Christ, that he wrought such an infinite number of miracles, that he assumed a body of a virgin, without the concurrence of a man: that he rose from the dead, assuming his own body, by his own power, and afterwards ascended into heaven.

FOR,

FOR, as Christ was not a mere man, but SECT.
VI.
took the human nature into the divine; so he being God and Man in one person, these extraordinary and miraculous acts, cannot be thought to be beyond his almighty power.

IF any false christ or false prophet should arise, though he might by the power of magic amaze and astonish mankind; yet they must want these mighty works I have instanced in, which were wrought by Christ, as proofs of his divinity, and of the excellent and universal tendence of his gospel.

THEREFORE, suppose a false prophet should rise among us, at this day, and pretend to abolish christianity and establish a new revelation in its stead, he would certainly pretend that his doctrine was more excellent than Christ's. We, on the other hand, should expect, that he should work, in favour of his pretensions, greater miracles than our Saviour wrought: which is impossible. For what prophet can give a greater instance of his power, than Christ did in the supernatural assumption of our nature: or what greater proof of his mission or advent, than that Christ gave by the raising

PART raising of his own body. Or, lastly, what
 II. greater instance of his power, than that
 Christ gave of his ascension into heaven.
 Therefore, the caution Christ gives us,
Matth. xxiv. 24, 25. is very useful: “ If
 “ any man shall say, Lo, here is Christ,
 “ or there : believe it not.”

IF a man pretending to a revelation could not perform such mighty works, we certainly should reject him as an impostor. It may be inferred, from *Matth.* xxiv. 24. that it is in the power of false prophets to work great signs and wonders ; but it does not follow, that they are real miracles, but impositions on mankind. They may by these arts deceive people, if they do not closely examine them. Which if they do, they will soon discover the cheat. But then, though these false prophets may, or can, by magic, or other arts perform many wonderful things ; it does not follow, as our author insinuates, *p.* 27. that they are or will be capable of performing such wonderful works as those wrought by our Lord. There will always be a wide difference. It cannot be in the power of a man or angel to perform such wondrous deeds as God the Son incarnate performed.

performed. And the reason is plain, be-
cause the one was created, and the other is
uncreate. The one is finite in power, the
other infinite in power.

S E C T.

VI.

IN the next page our author wrests the
words of *Moses*, “ A Prophet shall the

p. 28.

“ Lord your God raise up unto thee, like
“ unto me, to him shall ye hearken : ” to

imply a succession of prophets to succeed
Moses in analogy to the heathen diviners.

This is much of the same nature, with what
follows, that *these prophets got a livelihood*

p. 28, 29.

*by the discovery of lost goods, and in telling
fortunes, shewed their divine inspiration, and
who were paid for it by those that consulted
them, either in victuals, or money, or presents.*

THE prophecy of *Moses* is limited to
one, A Prophet, not to many, or a succe-
sion of prophets. Therefore the words re-
late in their literal and obvious sense to a
particular Prophet, and without figure or
allegory meet their completion in Christ, and
in no person else. The order of prophets
cannot in any sense be said to be like unto
Moses. *Moses* gave the *Israelites* a law ; but
the succession of prophets were only ex-
horters of the people to observe it. They
never

PART never gave, or pretended to give, the jewish
 II. nation a new or different body of laws from
 those which *Moses* had given. *Moses* was
 looked upon by the jews to be infallible. But *Ezra* says, that several of the prophets, in their exhortations to observe *Moses's* law, had erred in wisdom, and stumbled in judgment. So that there was no likeness, between *Moses* and the prophets; unless it was, that they were *Israelites* as well as *Moses*.

BUT between *Moses* and CHRIST, the likeness is as strong as it is possible to be between a mere man, as *Moses* was, and Christ, who was God and Man. *Moses* gave the *Israelites* a new system of religion, laws and ordinances, as a rule for their conduct. Christ declared a new revelation, and published new rules of thinking and acting.

IT now follows, that christianity is supported by other arguments than those taken from prophecy. I have shewn in my answer to this chapter, that our author has ignorantly cited passages out of the evangelists to prove, that prophecy is the sole proof of christianity. I have, elsewhere, fully shewn, that christianity is supported by arguments

guments arising from the internal excellence of the gospel, and from the miracles wrought in confirmation of it *. Where the reader will find a full answer to the assertions of this writer in defence of his prophetic scheme to the exclusion of all other arguments, besides those drawn from prophecy. He will there find, that Christ laid the chief stress of his arguments upon the intrinsic excellence of his doctrines and principles ; that, in the second place, he appeals to his miracles as a confirmation and valid proof of the good tence of his gospel ; and, that he, in the third and last place, directs the people to the prophetic expectant testimony of the jewish writers, as a third valid and corroborative proof in favour of his dispensation.

SECT. VII.

ANSWER to chap. VII.

IN the last and foregoing chapters our author affirmed, that the sole proof of christianity was urged by Christ and his apostles

* Part I. Chap. VII, VIII.

PART II. *It* fles from the prophecies of the *Old Testament*. In answer to it, I have shewn, that they are not the sole proof of christianity ; but only a part of the sole proof, and that the third in order. That the prophecies are literally and obviously applicable to several events and occurrences under the gospel dispensation is really fact.

FROM his assertion, that the Old Testament prophecies are the sole proof of christianity, he draws this conclusion, *that if those proofs* (the proofs by prophecy) *are invalid, then is christianity false*. And hereupon he takes occasion to run down the proof of christianity by miracles. He tells us, *That miracles wrought by Jesus, are no absolute proofs of his being the Messias, or of the truth of christianity*. If he means by no absolute proofs, that miracles are not the sole proof of christianity, I agree with him : but yet this does not hinder their being a principal part of the sole proof.

HE says, that Jesus and his apostles built christianity on the prophecies of the Old Testament ; and if these be not valid, *the foundation on which Jesus and his apostles built it is then invalid and false*. Let it be allowed, that

that Christ and his apostles did, in their building of christianity, reason with jews from prophecies: yet it does not follow, that christianity is destitute of other and external arguments. For the evidence in behalf of the christian religion consists of three branches, and not of one only. Namely, that of its internal excellency, miracles and prophecy. Which three make up the sole proof of christianity.

THE objection or assertion of our author through this chapter, is, That miracles are no part of the sole proof of christianity, no more than if they had never been wrought, unless it be allowed that those miracles were wrought because prophesied of in the *Old Testament*. And therefore they are no otherwise to be considered as proofs, than as fulfilling the sayings of the *Old Testament*. In that sense they are good proofs, and in that sense only. But this does not appear to be a right representation of this matter. If it were, in my opinion, Christ would first have urged the proof by prophecy, and expressed himself in such a manner as this: Such and such a prophecy prove that I have a power to work miracles. So that if there had

PART had been no prophet which prophesied of
II. such and such miracles, it consequently follows, that Christ could not have performed the miracles he wrought. Then the truth of a miracle being wrought would depend on the prophecy of such a miracle, and the power of working the miracle on its prophecy. But this was not the method Christ took, as will appear from *Matth. xi. 4—6*, the very passage cited by our author, *p. 38.* to shew that Christ urged his miracles to prove that they were wrought only to fulfill the predictions of the *Old Testament*.

JOHN the baptist being put into prison by *Herod*, and hearing of the works of Christ, sent two of his disciples to ask him,
 “ Art thou he that should come, or do we
 “ look for another? Jesus answered and said
 “ unto them, Go and shew John again those
 “ things which ye do hear and see: The
 “ blind receive their sight, and the lame
 “ walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf
 “ hear, the dead are raised up, and the
 “ poor have the gospel preached to them.”

OUR Lord does not cite a prophet as foretelling these things: but plainly appeals to his doctrine and miracles, and perhaps tacitly

tacitly to prophecy, as the three proofs of his being He that was to come. But what I remark is, that our Lord appeals to miracles as an absolute part of the sole proof of his being the Christ, the Son of God. As is plainly expressed in these words: *Go, and shew again those things which ye do see.* What was it that they saw? He tells them in the prophetic stile: *The blind saw, the lame walked, &c.* They at that very time saw Christ restore to sight some that were blind, others that were lame, &c. Which things they were to tell *John*. This was (in part) to satisfy him that Christ was He that was for to come.

BUT suppose, the chief part of our Saviour's answer to *John* be a citation out of *Isaiab*, it does not appear, that the appeal is made primarily to the prophecy, exclusive of his doctrine and miracles. For it does appear plainly, that Christ urges as a proof of his being He that was for to come, first his doctrine, *Go and shew John those things which ye do hear.* And then 2dly, his miracles, *Go and shew John those things which ye see.* And then it might tacitly follow, 3dly, from prophecy: How applicable to this are

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the

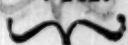
PART the words of the prophets: *The blind receive*
 II. *their sight, &c.*

THIS is the true representation of the matter. And therefore, it does appear from the words of our Saviour, that miracles are a proof of his being the Messiah, and that he urged them as such to the disciples of *John*. Our author's assertion, on the other hand, that miracles were urged by Jesus as proofs fulfilling only the prophecies of the *Old Testament*, is a misrepresentation.

AND it was no unusual thing for our Lord to appeal to his miracles as a proof of his Messiahship. Thus he tells the jews, "The works which I do, they bear witness of me." And again, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." And, "Believe me for my very works sake."

THUS it evidently appears, that proofs from the *Old Testament* are valid corroborative proofs, though they are not the sole proofs of christianity, and that miracles are not to be accounted as no proofs, as our author asserts; but are to be looked upon as proper proofs of the truth of christianity, and

and as such are made use of and appealed to by Christ. SECT. VIII.



SECT. VIII.

ANSWER to chap. VIII.

OUR author, having in the foregoing chapters run down all other proof of christianity, besides that of prophecy which he would make the sole proof of it; in this chapter informs us, That the proofs by prophecy, are *not proofs according to scholastic rules*; or if they be, they are so in a *secondary, or typical, or mystical, or allegorical, or enigmatical sense*; that is, says he, in a sense different from the obvious and literal sense, which they bear in the Old Testament. I acknowledge, that nothing is more plain, than that some of the prophecies of the *Old Testament* do in their primary sense relate to other events, than Christ and the matters relating to him: yet it does not follow, but these very prophecies may, and do, in a strict, literal, and obvious sense, relate to Christ also; they may meet a fuller, a more strict and literal completion in Jesus and the

p. 39, 40.

PART matters relating to him. As for example :

II.

When *Rezin* and *Pekab* were confederate against *Abaz*, the prophet *Isaiab* tells *Abaz*, that a virgin, (or a young woman) shall conceive and bear a son, and that before the child should know to refuse the evil and chuse the good, the land which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. This was a sign to *Abaz*, that these things should come to pass. *Isaiab* took *Uriab* the priest, and *Zechariah*, and went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son. This, I confess, relates to *Abaz* in a particular manner, and to *Isaiab*'s son. But though these words relate to *Isaiab*'s son in their primary sense, yet the other part of *Isaiab*'s prophecy does not in its primary sense relate to *Isaiab*'s son : but do in their primary, literal, and obvious sense relate to a child that was to be born in future time :
 “ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son
 “ is given, and the government shall be up-
 “ on his shoulder : and his name shall be
 “ called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The
 “ mighty God, The everlasting Father,
 “ The Prince of peace. Of the increase
 “ of his government and peace there shall
 “ be

“ be no end, upon the throne of David and
 “ upon his kingdom, to order it, and to
 “ establish it with judgment and with justice
 “ from henceforth even for ever : the zeal
 “ of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

SECT.
 VIII.

Isaiab ix. 6, 7. Our author has purposely omitted this part of the prophecy, well-knowing, that such great titles and events did not belong to *Isaiab*'s son. I judge, therefore, that though this prophecy met part of its completion in the days of *Abaz*, king of *Judab* ; yet, I affirm, it was, all parts of it, strictly, literally and obviously fulfilled in Christ, and in him only. To him, in the most strict and literal sense, are applicable those words : “ Behold a virgin
 “ shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall
 “ call his name, Immanuel.” As Christ assumed the human nature of a pure virgin, without the concurrence of a man, so St. *Matthew*'s application of it to this event is just and obvious. And nothing can be more false than the assertion of this writer, that the evangelist has applied it in a *typical, mystical, allegorical or enigmatical sense*. Indeed, had he given us the whole prophecy it would have spoiled his intention, which was to

PART prove, that the prophecies of the *Old Testament* are applied in the *New*, in a sense different from the literal and obvious sense.

p. 46, 47. To prove this, he proceeds and tells us, that the words cited by *Matthew* from *Hosea*: “Out of Egypt have I called my son,” are applied to Christ’s coming out of *Egypt*, allegorically, i. e. he means, in a sense different from the literal and obvious sense. Though these words are no prophecy, nor as such spoken by *Hosea*; yet the jews of our Saviour’s time expecting that the Messiah should come out of *Egypt*, I judge, that the application of these words to Christ’s return out of *Egypt* is just, literal and obvious, pertinent and agreeable to the real matter of fact (the return of Christ out of *Egypt*) and as such used by the evangelist. The arguing of St. *Matthew* is only this: How applicable to this event are the words of *Hosea*: Out of *Egypt* have I called my son.

p. 47. AGAIN, he tells us, that these words of *Matthew*, “He shall be called a Nazarene: do not expressly occur in the *Old Testament*. Allowed; but then it does not follow, that therefore the *Old Testament* is not fulfilled therein. Nazarene was a term of contempt and

and reproach. *Nazareth* was the most despisable town in *Galilee*. Now *Joseph* bringing Christ up out of *Egypt*, and hearing that *Archelaus*, *Herod's* son, reigned in *Judea* he departed into *Galilee*, and went and dwelt in a place called *Nazareth*. By this means our Lord was counted a worthless insignificant fellow, and was, because this was the place of his education, despised and ridiculed, as all the inhabitants of this place were. And this appears from *Nathaniel's* question to *Philip*, "Can there any good thing (*i. e.* Can any man worthy of respect and reverence) come out of *Nazareth*?" *John* i. 46. With this name the jews reproached and vilified Christ when he suffered, they wrote over his head, "Jesus of *Nazareth* the king of the jews," *Cb.* xix. 19. Christians were afterwards called by this contemptuous name, *St. Paul* is stiled, "The ring-leader of the sect of the *Nazarenes*." *Acts* xxiv. 5. This being the case of our Lord: Thus, says, *St. Matthew*, are applicable to this event, the expectations of the prophets concerning the despite and contempt the *Messiah* should meet with: particularly that of *Isaiah*: "He is despised and rejected of men."

PART *Ch. liii. 3.* So that the words, *He shall be called a Nazarene*, signifies, that the prophets foretold, that Christ should be despised and contemned by men.

II. *III* *p. 47, 48.* FURTHER, our author says, that the prophecy of *Mal. iv. 5*, was *not literally but mystically fulfilled in John the baptist*. It might be literally fulfilled in *John*: for our Saviour's words are, "All the prophets, and the law prophesied untill John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." There is nothing in these words that contradicts the literal fulfilment of *Malachi's* prophecy.

p. 48. THE last prophecy our author represents as applied in the *New Testament* out of the *Old*, in a *mystical, enigmatical sense*, is that of *Isaiab*, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand." Christ's words are: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not: and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophesie of *Esaïas*, which saith, By hearing, &c." I paraphrase the words thus: I teach and instruct the people in my doctrines

doctrines by fit, apt and proper similitudes, SECT. VIII.
because the powers of their souls are so far
weakened and impaired, that they do not
clearly perceive spiritual things; so that if I
did not take this method, the people would
hear, but not understand: and yet although
by this means they are capable of perceiving
the truths I deliver unto them, they neither
perceive, nor understand them. Very ap-
plicable to their case is the prediction of
Esaias, *By hearing ye shall hear, and shall*
not understand. Thus it appears, that these
words of *Isaiab* are literally applied by Christ
to the jews of his time. And nothing is
more foreign to truth than the assertion of
this writer, that the prophecies of the *Old*
Testament are applied in the *New* in a typical,
mystical, enigmatical sense, that is, in a sense
different from the literal and obvious sense,
which they bear in the *Old Testament*.

BUT though it must be allowed, that
there are some *Old Testament* prophecies that
do relate to other matters, as well as Christ
and his doctrines: yet I have before fully
shewn *, that there are many prophecies of
the

* See Part I. Chap. ix. p. 365, &c.

PART the *Old Testament*, which relate to no other events than Jesus and his gospel, and are literally and obviously fulfilled in him.

II.

I PASS over our author's ninth and tenth chapters, because they contain nothing material in them.

SECT. IX.

ANSWER to chap. XI.

p. 79, 80.

OUR author says, That *Moses and the prophets are every where* [in the *New Testament*] represented to be a just foundation for christianity. And that the apostles always argued absolutely from the quotations they make out of the books of the *Old Testament*. This is the assertion of this chapter of our author's book. We will therefore examine the proofs he has given us to support it, and see whether the case be such or not. His first is, that of *Rom, xvi. 25, 26.* which he delivers thus: And Paul expressly says, that the gospel which was kept secret since the world began, was now made manifest by the scriptures of the prophets (*wherein that gospel was secretly contained*) to all nations, by the means of

of the preachers of the gospel, who gave the secret or spiritual sense of those scriptures. The

words of the apostle are these: " Now to
" him that is of power to stablish you ac-
" cording to my gospel, and the preaching
" of Jesus Christ, (according to the revela-
" tion of the mystery, which was kept se-
" cret since the world began, But now is
" made manifest, and by the scriptures of
" the prophets according to the command-
" ment of the everlasting God, made known
" to all nations for the obedience of faith.")

Here are in this passage of St. *Paul* contained these six things: 1. That the apostle had preached the gospel, according to the doctrines, principles, and instructions of Christ, *according to my gospel, and the preaching of Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery.* 2. The apostle's opinion, that the revelation made by Christ was designed at the beginning of the world to be published at that time: it is very probable, that the apostle tacitly alludes to the promise made with our first parents in paradise, *Gen. iii. 15.* " I will put enmity between thee and
" the woman, and between thy seed and
" her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and
" thou

PART 2 "thou shalt bruise his heel." *Which was*

II. kept secret since the world began, i. e. Tho^o
 proposed, or designed, yet not published
 till the coming of Christ. 3. The Apostle
 asserts, that though this had been secret for
 so long a time, yet now this mystery was
 published; *but now is made manifest.* 4. That
 according to the books of the *Old Testament*,
 the prophets, or good men under the jewish
 oeconomy, did expect a revelation of the
 will of God, or a manifestation of the my-
 stery promised, *Gen. iii. 15. And by the scrip-
 tures of the prophets, i. e. it does appear from
 the writings of the prophets, that they did
 expect a manifestation of the mystery of re-
 demption.* 5. The apostle was of opinion,
 that this was made known to us according
 to a decree, that had been made in heaven.
 His words are: *according to the commandment
 of the everlasting God.* 6. He declares it was
 to be published for the good of all nations,
*made known to all nations for the obedience of
 faith.* The matter asserted in this passage
 of *St. Paul* appears to be this: That Christ,
 and he according to Christ's teaching, had
 revealed to mankind the mystery which God
 had promised of old, and which the prophets
 did

did expect would be revealed to all nations. SECT. XI
 Our author asserts, that St. Paul says, that the *gospel was secretly contained* in the books of the *Old Testament*. But it does appear, that St. Paul never said so, at least, it cannot be concluded from this passage. For it is plain, that an expectation of a revelation is not the revelation itself. So that the apostle says, that the prophets expected a revelation; not, that they knew what that revelation was, and kept it secret: or, that they knew the revelation, but could not explain it. It is therefore a palpable untruth in this writer, where he with so much assurance affirms, that *the preachers of the gospel gave only the secret or spiritual sense of those scriptures*: when the revelation or mystery was not made known to the writers of the books of the *Old Testament*. But the revelation itself was made known by Christ to the first preachers of the gospel, who made it known to all the world. Thus it plainly appears, that this passage of St. Paul cited by our author, proves the contrary to what he produced it to support.

NEXT he affirms, That St. Paul, Ibid,
Acts xiii, 15—48. *reasoned from the books*
 of

PART of the *Old Testament allegorically* [that is to say, in a sense different from the literal and obvious sense] *with greater success on gentiles than on jews.* The sermon of St. Paul recorded, *Acts* xiii. 15—48. was preached at *Antioch in Pisidia.* “When they departed
 II. “from Perga, they came to Antioch in
 “Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on
 “the sabbath-day.” This assembly were jews, not gentiles, as our author would insinuate. The rulers of this synagogue desired *Paul* to speak, *ver.* 15. Upon which, he stood up, and said, “Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.” Who did the apostle speak to? 1. The *Israelites*, and 2dly, the proselytes of the gate, which though they were called gentiles, because they would not conform to the rites and ceremonies of the mosaic law, yet were men that feared God, and worshipped him. These proselytes were admitted to come into the synagogue, though not to fill the highest places there. These then were the persons *Paul* preached to. There were many jews, but it may be justly surmised, that at this time, there were a very few gentiles present. And these, forbid by the jews to
 come

come within the full hearing of *St. Paul*. For though they might hear him, yet he having a defect in his speech, they could not so well understand him. And this does appear from their desiring him to speak the same words unto them, *ver. 42*. Hence it follows, that *St. Paul* reasoned only with the jews of *Antioch* in *Pisidia* at this time. Having thus stated the matter, let us now see in what manner *St. Paul* argued with these *Antiochan* jews. And it does appear from *v. 17* to *23*, that *St. Paul* gives them a genealogy of *Christ*, in an historical way, which the reader will easily perceive, if he will turn unto it. In *ver. 24, 25*. he speaks of *John* the baptist, taking it for granted, they knew of such a man. And having spoke of the promise of salvation, *ver. 23*, he says, *ver. 26*, “ That salvation was sent to the children of the stock of Abraham, and who-soever among you that feareth God.” This salvation, he tells them, in *ver. 27*, the rulers that dwelt at *Jerusalem*, “ Because they knew him [*Christ*] not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.” That is, because

PART because they did not listen to his divine doctrines, nor imbibe his principles, nor pay a due regard to the prophetic expectations of their prophets concerning the Messiah, and the matters relating to him, they put him to death, and thereby have fulfilled all the prophetic expectant passages concerning Christ's sufferings. And from this verse he goes on to *ver.* 33, relating the circumstances of Christ's death and resurrection, and ends with these words: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." These words are a citation from the *Psalms*, *ps.* ii. 7. The prophet says, "The Lord hath said unto me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." The words are represented as the words of God; therefore they cannot relate to any person besides Christ, who was the Son of God, the express image of the Father, or as our excellent creed * says, Who is GOD OF GOD, LIGHT OF LIGHT, VERY GOD OF VERY GOD. The apostle therefore hath in a literal and obvious sense applied this prophecy to Christ, and to his resurrection, which he,

having

* Vid. *Liturgy*, Nicene Creed.

having ascribed to divine power, says, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* And that it does literally and obviously relate to Christ, appears from the following verse, “ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the hea-
“ then for thine inheritance, and the utter-
“ most parts of the earth for thy posses-
“ sion.” And *ver. 12.* “ Kifs the Son, lest
“ he be angry, and ye perish from the way,
“ when his wrath is kindled but a little :
“ blessed are all they that put their trust
“ in him.” Again, “ Thou wilt not suffer
“ thine holy one to see corruption.” This
prophecy the apostle argues to relate lite-
rally and obviously to Christ, his words are:
“ For David after he had served his own
“ generation, by the will of God fell asleep,
“ and was laid unto his fathers, and saw
“ corruption.” So that it does now appear,
that *St. Paul* did not argue with the jews of
Antioch in an allegorical sense [*i. e.* in a sense
different from the literal and obvious sense]
but in a sense literal and obvious relating to
Christ, to him only, and to the matters re-
lating to him. I would here add, that *St.*
Paul did not lay the stress of his argument
upon the literal and obvious application of
G G these

PART these passages to Christ, but on the matter
 II. of facts themselves, namely, the doctrines
 of Christ, and his resurrection, which were
 events they could not be ignorant of, and
 then, he by way of corroborative evidence
 and illustration, adds these passages: all
 which is so apparent, through his whole ser-
 mon, that I need not particularly prove
 this assertion. See *Acts* xiii. 15—48.

BUT our author affirms, that St. *Paul*
 preached allegorically from the *Old Testa-*
ment to the gentiles. The religious gentiles
 present in the synagogue of *Antioch*, ver.
 42, 43. “ besought that these words might
 “ be preached to them the next sabbath.”
 But it does not appear that St. *Paul* made
 the least mention of the *Old Testament* to
 them. It is said, that “ the word of the
 “ Lord was published throughout all the
 “ region.” By which I conceive is meant,
 that the gospel which Christ had command-
 ed the apostles to preach, was published
 throughout *Pisidia*. And it follows from
 hence, that the apostles in their preaching
 christianity, appealed to the reasons of men,
 and convinced them by the method of ap-
 peal, by argument and persuasion, taken
 from

from the internal excellence of the ideas, SECT. IX.
doctrines, and principles of Christ, and from
the real matters of fact, the miracles, (es-
pecially that of his resurrection) which he had
wrought in favour of them. And that he
did not so much as cite a passage out of the
Old Testament, at any time, when he preach-
ed to mere heathens.

OUR author's next instance to prove that
St. *Paul* allegorized the books of the *Old*
Testament, or shewed the spiritual, secret
sense of those writings, in his preaching to
gentiles, is, *Acts* xxvi. 22, 23. he has not
given us the words of the apostle, for his as-
sertion, I will transcribe them, " Having
" therefore obtained help of God, I conti-
" nue unto this day, witnessing both to
" small and great, saying none other things
" than those which Moses and the prophets
" did say should come : That Christ should
" suffer, and that he should be the first that
" should rise from the dead, and shew light
" unto the people, and to the gentiles." The
apostle asserts, [there were jews as well as
gentiles then present] that his preaching was
concerning none other topics than those
which *Moses* and the prophets had propheti-

Ibid.

PART cally expected should come: which was,
 II. that Christ should suffer, (an event *Festus*,
 before whom St. *Paul* now spoke, was not ignorant of) and that he would rise from the dead, and would be a light to the gentiles. The prophets of the *Old Testament* delivered it as their opinion, that the Messiah would, when he appeared, enlighten the gentiles*: this they expected. And as they expected it, so St. *Paul* says, he preaching the gospel to lighten the gentiles, preached what the jewish prophets expected would come to pass. This is his assertion, *ver.* 22, 23. But nothing is more evident, than that the apostle made use of other and more substantial arguments than this to support christianity, and that nothing is more false than what this writer says, that St. *Paul* argued *absolutely* from the *Old Testament* scriptures before *Festus* and *Agrippa*. For, 1. The apostle appeals to the facts of christianity: he tells *Agrippa*, that he knew these events: "Because I know thee to be expert
 " in all customs and questions among the
 " jews." What were these *questions*? and

to

* See Part I. Chap. III. p. 123.

to whom and to what affairs did they relate? SECT.
The reply is, that they relate to Christ, his IX.
doctrines, and the miracles he wrought.

Concerning these events these *questions* had arisen among the jews. All which Agrippa was expert in. 2. The apostle, having prefaced his defence in *ver.* 2, 3, 4, 5. in *ver.* 6. says, that he stood accused for preaching or publishing the facts of the gospel, which dispensation had been promised to, and expected by the patriarchs. 3. He instances in a matter of fact, the resurrection of Christ; “Why should it be thought a “thing incredible with you, that God “should raise the dead?” 4. The apostle proceeds to give an account of his behaviour towards the disciples of Christ, *ver.* 8--14. of his conversion, *ver.* 15—18. and of his preaching the gospel, *ver.* 19, 20. Here are real matters of fact insisted on, and these our author takes no notice of. This unfair method of writing shews, that he paid no regard to truth: and, I judge, makes it evident, that he has either ignorantly or wilfully misrepresented this and all other his citations from the holy scriptures.

PART HIS third citation is of the same nature,

II. St. *Peter* having related divers events, concludes his sermon with these words: "To
 " him give all the prophets witness, that
 " through his name, whosoever believeth in
 " him, shall receive remission of sins,"

Acts x. 43. i. e. The prophets, *Moses*, *Isaiab*, *Daniel*, *Ezekiel*, *Jeremiab* and *Micab*, prophetically expected that whoever imbibed the doctrines and principles of the Messiah, those would obtain remission of their sins. Upon the whole, there is in this way of applying prophecies, no allegory, or forced meaning put upon the words of the prophets; but it is a literal and obvious application of them.

Ibid.

BUT he says, St. *Paul* took his christianity from the law and the prophets. To prove this, he cites *Acts* xxiv. 14. xxvi. 6, 7, 22, 23. I will transcribe the passages in their order:
 1. " But this I confess unto thee, that after
 " the way which they call heresie, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing
 " all things which are written in the law
 " and the prophets," *ib.* xxiv. 14. The plain meaning of which words, is, that St. *Paul* declared, that though they called christianity

christianity, heresie ; yet in that manner he thought it his duty to worship the God of his fathers : believing at the same time the prophetic traditions concerning Christ and the gospel written in the law and the prophets. Here is nothing in these words of St. *Paul* that asserts, that he *took his christianity from the law and the prophets*. Nay, it is plain, that the apostle elsewhere affirms, he received the gospel immediately from heaven, “ Paul an apostle (not of men, “ neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, ”) *Gal. i. 1. Acts ix. 5, 6.* So that the truth is, St. *Paul* received his christianity from Christ. The second, is, *Acts xxvi. 6.* “ And now I stand and am judged for the “ hope of the promise made of God unto “ our fathers.” St. *Paul* having declared before *Agrippa*, his education, concludes with the words just cited, which have a plain reference to the promise of *Gen. iii. 15.* to our first parents, and of *Gen. xii. 3. xxii. 18.* to *Abraham*. And literally signify only, that the promise of christianity, (not that doctrine itself) was contained in the *Old Testament*, or in the most ancient traditions and records that were come down

PART to them. No other meaning besides this
 II. can be put upon these words.

OUR author next endeavours to misre-
 p. 86. present the intention of these two verses in
 St. *Mark*, ch. iv. 33, 34. “ And with ma-
 “ ny such parables spake he the word unto
 “ them, as they were able to hear it. But
 “ without a parable spake he not unto
 “ them: And when they were alone, he
 “ expounded all things to his disciples.”
 Which, he says, was speaking in *dark say-
 ings*. The only intention of the evangelist,
 is to assert, that our Lord, whenever he
 preached the gospel, adorned his discourse
 with fit and apt similitudes. For he says,
 that Christ spake the word with proper si-
 miles, and without such he did not preach:
 but because he intended, that those his dis-
 ciples, who constantly attended him, should
 preach his gospel to all the world, he in pri-
 vate was accustomed to teach them his doc-
 trines and principles. This, I judge, is the
 truth.

OUR author in his citation from the first
 * 82. epistle to the *Corinthians*, is so modest as to
 say, That St. Paul *seems to disclaim all other
 methods of arguing besides the allegorical.* But
 if

if the reader will give himself the trouble to read the places cited by our author, viz. S E C T. IX.

1 Cor. i. and ii. he will find, that the apostle neither makes use of the allegorical method of arguing; nor, consequently, so much as seems to disclaim other methods of arguing.

IN his first chapter, he does not so directly argue against the *Greeks* and philosophers of his time, as he persuades the *Corinthians*, to whom he was then writing, to continue stedfast in the faith, telling them, that the gospel was wisdom to them, and the only method of salvation: but to the *Greeks* and to the *Jews*, it seemed an idle story. Why does *St. Paul* say, that Christ crucified, was to the jews a stumbling-block, and to the greeks foolishness? I answer, Because both the jews and the greeks expected that when Christ the Messiah should come, he would appear a great, temporal, and victorious prince; and he not answering these their vain expectations, but appearing in a low and suffering condition, they therefore rejected him, and counted it folly to become his disciples. And this is what he tells the *Corinthians*. And then adds:

PART adds: 'But unto them which are called, both
 II. jews and greeks, Christ the power of God,
 and the wisdom of God :'*i. e.* but unto you
Corinthians, whether of the jewish race or
 of the grecian, who have embraced the doc-
 trines of the gospel, and look upon Christ,
 as a great and spiritual Saviour, to you my
 preaching appears the wisdom of God. The
 design of the whole chapter (and of the epi-
 stle itself) is no other, than to exhort this
 people to continue stedfast in the faith of
 christianity. So that it does not appear from
 any passage in this chapter, that St. *Paul*
 wrote this epistle for the use of unbelievers.
 It is plain, from *ver. 2.* that he dedicates it
 to the believers in *Corinth*, "Unto the
 church of God which is at Corinth, to
 them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus."
 Hence, I think, it does not follow, that the
 apostle designed this epistle for the uncon-
 verted as well as the converted. Though
 he designed it for jews and gentiles; but
 then these were become christians, and the
 church of *Corinth* (as all churches were) was
 made up of both.

NEXT follows the apostle's argument in
 his second chapter, thus: When I began to
 preach

preach among you the gospel of Christ, I made no use of art in my speeches, in order to impose upon you, or by force of eloquence endeavour to persuade you to receive the doctrines I preached. For I was determined to declare naked truth in plain words, and instill the principles and doctrines of Christ into you by argument and persuasion, drawn only from the real matters of fact themselves, that your reception of the gospel, might be an act of your spiritual beings founded and established in you by conviction, and not by force or violence, or by sophistical arguments. And that the words I have preached are true, and really such as I have represented them, those who have received the principles and doctrines of Christ in sincerity and truth, are proper judges: but to those who do not, nor will not, imbibe the principles of Christ, the words I have preached are lost, and are as a mystery to them, secret and hidden. For though Christ, our lawgiver, preached a most pure doctrine, and wrought many signs and wonders, yet the princes of this world did not believe on him; but crucified him the Lord of glory, who had proclaimed to the ends of

SECT.
XI.

PART of the world salvation and restoration to
II. those heavenly joys and privileges which eye
hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath
it entred into the heart of man to conceive,
the things which God hath prepared for
them that love him. These things the car-
nal man knoweth nothing of; but we who
have listened to, and embraced the gospel
of Christ, we understand the benefits of a
spiritual life, peace and everlasting joy;
which are to be enjoyed by those only who
come into the terms of salvation. And we
who teach this gospel, must teach it in a
spiritual way, comparing spiritual things
with spiritual. The gospel thus taught, the
man who addicts himself to vice, under-
stands not, it is to him folly; and if he does
not lay aside his passions and vices, and listen
to the pure dictates of his soul, he can never
receive the overtures of salvation, because
the gospel of Christ, if received, must be
received by his soul, (*i. e.* his spiritual be-
ing). Now, he who listens to the pure and
unbiaſſed dictates of his soul, judgeth of, and
receiveth the principles of Christ our Saviour.
For he hath made known to us his everlast-
ing will, the redemption of man. This is
the

the plain meaning of St. *Paul's* words. There is no allegory in them: his reasoning is plain, obvious and literal; not allegorical, not secret, hidden and mystical, as our author says, *p.* 92, 93. Thus does this writer, one instance after another, endeavour to impose upon his reader.

HE goes on, *p.* 93. *Is there*, says he, *the least ground from the literal sense in Genesis, to suppose Abraham's two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, signified the two covenants?* Who says they did? *Paul* does not say that *Isaac* and *Ishmael* signified the two covenants. It is true, the whole passage is an allegory. And, I judge, that the apostle is justified by the common rules of argument and persuasion in drawing this parallel between the state of unbelievers and believers. His argument I take to be this: There are some among you, *Galatians*, who are for holding judaism in conjunction with christianity: but hear ye what is written in the records of that religion; there is a case very pertinent to this subject, I would have you consider it particularly, it is this: *Abraham* had two sons, the one by a woman who was not his wife, the other by *Sarah* his own wife, his other

PART other self, and proper companion. The
 II. first son was excluded, as the off-spring of
 an irregular act, the second son (born of *Sarah* his wife) inherited as the off-spring of a regular act, according to the will of God.* These two sons will parallel the case in hand. For there have been two covenants, the one given by *Moses*, which tends to make us slaves to burthensome rites and ceremonies of external worship, for it has kept our forefathers shut up in bondage, and if we observe this covenant, it will keep us in bondage also; like as the posterity of *Ishmael* (or *Agar*) were disinherited, and ever since excluded from the promise or covenant. And as many as do now observe this old covenant, remain in bondage. But the second covenant is from above, and has abolished the old covenant: wherefore all nations and people are now become joint partakers of this new law. For *Isaiab* prophetically expecting a revelation of the will of God, was of opinion, that the heathen people, which at that time were barren of good works; would, in the days of the gospel, flow

* Gen. xx. 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 16.

flow into the worship of the true God, observe his laws, and be obedient to his rule and government. Now we, who imbrace christianity, and reject the old law, may be compared to *Isaac* and his posterity, who were the true and regular descendants of *Abraham*. The unbelievers resemble *Ismael*, who being an illegal son, persecuted *Isaac* who was the legal son of *Abraham*; so the obstinate jews by keeping up and maintaining their laws of separation, persecute the receivers of a more pure doctrine, and by that means keep themselves shut up in a state of bondage. And here you might recollect the event of *Abraham's* irregularity; for he was obliged to disinherit the son he had by *Agar*, a strange woman, though his first born, and take into his place *Isaac*, the son of *Sarah*, his own wife. And now it follows, *Galatians*, that we are not children and disciples of the law of *Moses*, but of the gospel of Christ. Here is no secret, spiritual meaning in all this. The apostle's meaning is plain and obvious, and is only this: That the jews and christians resembled *Ismael* and *Isaac*, the one being in bondage through the law;

PART law; the other set free, as enjoying the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Our author's notion of *divine discernment* for St. Paul's drawing this parallel, is a mere conceit of his own, and has no foundation in this passage.

II. OUR author's last instance is that of *Cornelius*. This man was a centurion, "a just man, one that feared God, and of good report among all the nation of the jews." The method of his arguing with *Cornelius*, and those that were present, appear to be drawn from the doctrine Christ preached, and from the miracles he wrought. For first he urges, "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all). That word (*I say*) ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached." *Acts* x. 36, 37. And then secondly, his miracles, Who went about doing good, and that he rose again on the third day, *ver* 38, 40. And thirdly, tells them, that the prophets expected that thro' the gospel of Christ, every one should gain remission of sins, *ver*. 43. All this he takes

no notice of; but he says, that St. *Peter* reasoned with gentiles as well as with jews for the truth of christianity from the *Old Testament*. *Cornelius* was a profelyte of the gate, and these profelytes were men who looked upon the writings of the *Old Testament* as valid. Therefore it was very pertinent in St. *Peter*, and very applicable to this event, to tell *Cornelius*, that the prophets had been of opinion, that all men, whether jews, profelytes of the gate, or mere heathens, if they received the Messiah and his doctrine, they should thereby obtain remission from their sins. To a gentile believing the *Old Testament*, a prophetic proof is as reasonable as to a mere jew. But our author cannot prove, that the apostles alledged proofs out of these books, to persons disbelieving these writings, mere heathens. For it must be allowed, that *Cornelius*, was a profelyte of the gate, a worshipper of the true God, and a man who regarded the writings of the *Old Testament*.

AND now, I hope, nothing appears to my reader more false, than our author's assertion in this chapter, that *the authors of*

PART II. *the books of the New Testament, always argue absolutely from the quotations they make out of the Old Testament, and that Moses and the prophets are every where represented to be a just foundation for christianity.* Likewise, I hope, it plainly appears, that this was the method the apostles always absolutely made use of in their converting the jews: 1. By arguments arising from the doctrines of christianity, and its internal excellence. 2. By those arising from miracles wrought by Christ in favour of it. And, 3. Those arising from a just, literal, and obvious application of certain passages of the *Old Testament*. This I assert to be the absolute method of the apostles arguings with jews. And that when they argued with idolaters, mere gentiles, disbelieving the *Old Testament*, they argued absolutely from the doctrines themselves, and from Christ's miracles, particularly from his resurrection of his own body, and did make no use of the *Old Testament* prophecies; but in the case of the profelytes of the gate, believers of the *Old Testament*, they argued in the same manner as with jews. But, suppose an idolater, after he had embraced christianity to become

become convinced of the truth of those writings, I cannot see why a preacher might not make use of the prophecies of the *Old Testament*, to confirm and establish him in christianity. And this might be the principal reason, why so many passages, cited by the apostles out of the *Old Testament*, do occur in the epistles which they have wrote to their several churches.

AND that the apostles arguments arising from the *Old Testament* prophecies, were arguments *ad hominem* to the jews, *i. e.* that they were taken from the allowed interpretation of those prophecies which was then, and had been long before among the jews, is, I think, very plain, from what has been offered in this part of my work. And I have before proved, that they generally expected the Messiah *: to whom they applied certain prophecies, and interpreted them as relating to him. That these were fulfilled in Christ, I have elsewhere shewn †. And there is nothing more true, than that Christ and his apostles reasoned with the jews from the allowed interpretation of the *Old Testament* prophecies.

* Part I. Chap. v. p. 179.

† Chap. ix. p. 365.



I FLATTER myself there is nothing more obvious to my reader, nor any thing more true, than that christianity is supported by other proofs than the *Old Testament* prophecies. Which other proofs are taken from the internal excellence of the doctrines and principles of the gospel, and from those miracles Christ its author wrought in confirmation of it. As this has appeared upon examination, to be the real truth: so it now follows, that christianity is supported by a threefold proof, *viz.* That of its internal excellence, that of miracles, and lastly, that of prophecy. Which three parts of proof, make up the sole proof of the christian religion: as I have fully shewn in my viith, viiith and ixth chapters of the first part and through the whole second part of this work. And thereby I judge, that I have fully and plainly replied to the misrepresentations, cavils, and trifling exceptions of an anonymous writer, in his book intitled, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.* AND

AND now upon the whole, it does appear, that christianity is true. Because,

SECT.

X.

1. ITS doctrines and facts are supported by the concurrent testimony of internal and external evidence.

2. THE doctrines and precepts of it tend to the perfection of our nature, to our present and future happiness. Were we sincerely to embrace them, peace, joy, unity and concord, would be the natural attendants of society. These things are the intrinsic tendency of the doctrines of Christ our salvation.

3. THE miracles of christianity are every-way suitable and agreeable hereto, worthy of God the Son to perform, and for their apparent veracity, challenge our credit, assent and consent.

4. THE expectations of the prophets were fulfilled in Christ and his gospel.

5. THE apostles and first preachers of christianity did, for the sake of this truth, suffer the bitterest torments and cruellest deaths. And no one ever affirmed, as yet, though by that means they might have escaped their persecutors fury, that christianity was an imposture. And,

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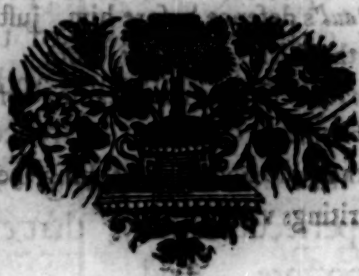
LASTLY,

PART
II.

LASTLY, The christian religion and its facts have been received and believed by all men in all ages, since the beginning of the gospel.

WE may therefore now lay it down for an everlasting maxim, That the christian religion is true ; that the doctrines preached, and miracles wrought by CHRIST, prove HIM the SON OF GOD, the SAVIOUR of the world, and the BEING whose principles and laws we ought to receive and observe.

F I N I S.



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